

Jackson
after New
York

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PAGES 3 & 14

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST

DUMP-SITE

Atlantic Ocean species in peril



Contras and drugs
The Kerry hearings

PAGE 6 & 7

Economic warfare
In the Occupied Territories

PAGE 9

Dick Russell reports page 12

Experts outline an alternative economic program

By John B. Judis

AUSTIN, TX

As the struggle for the Democratic nomination winds down, the battle for the party platform is just beginning. On April 14-15, at a conference on the economy held at the University of Texas' LBJ School of Public Affairs, liberal and left-wing policy experts fired off the first salvos. The policy experts—who included authors Robert Kuttner, Mark Green and Derek Shearer, former Carter administration Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall and economists John Kenneth Galbraith, Bennett Harrison and Heidi Hartmann—disagreed on some specifics, but the outlines of an economic program thus emerged, one that the party's left can take into battle against the party establishment.

The terms of this year's debate have been set by the country's continuing trade deficit, which threatens Americans' capacity to create prosperity. The question dividing Democrats is how to reduce it. Former Carter administration economist Charles Schultze, now with the Brookings Institution, and MIT economist Robert Solow, an adviser to New York Gov. Michael Dukakis, counsel austerity. In order to reduce the trade deficit, they argue, the U.S. has to reduce the demand for imports and shift income from consumption to investment. Both objectives require reducing consumption, whether through higher taxes or reduced social spending. To make American exports more attractive, these economists favor devaluing the dollar—which will make American goods less expensive overseas while reducing Americans' ability to purchase foreign goods.

But left-wing policy experts argue that this approach is self-defeating. They contend that the gap between the rich and poor caused by the Reagan tax cuts is already threatening consumer demand. To exacerbate it further could cause a serious recession. They also question whether a drop in American consumer demand—and therefore demand for imports—would be balanced by an increase in demand for American exports. "The world economy cannot afford austerity in the U.S. because no economy is prepared to grow if the U.S. does not," said James K. Galbraith, former Senate economist and now a professor at the LBJ School. The experts also point out that dollar devaluation would not affect American trade with less developed countries (LDCs) in Asia and Latin America, whose currency remains pegged to the dollar. Instead, they call for the U.S. to maintain or even in-

crease domestic consumption, while taking steps to boost demand overseas. While the moderates assume a trade-off between growth and equity, the left-wing experts believe that the two are inextricably linked—increased wages will spur investment and worker participation in management will improve productivity.

Managed trade: The left-wing program depends on increasing both foreign and domestic consumer demand. Among LDCs, whose share of American exports has gone from 25 percent in 1980 to 20 percent today, a way must be found to reduce these countries' debt to American, Western European and Japanese banks. At a minimum, this debt can be shrunk by allowing American interest rates to fall. However, one economist at the conference, University of North Carolina professor William Darity, advocated a much more radical action: LDCs should repudiate their debts.

At the same time, the U.S. has to force Japan to open its markets to American goods and a fiscally conservative West Germany to stimulate its economy. Jeff Faux, director of the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., called on the U.S. to use "the only leverage it has—access to the U.S. market"—to gain concessions from Japan and West Germany. MIT economist Bennett Harrison called on the U.S. to adopt a program of "managed trade" and "market sharing."

American trade also depends on making better goods cheaper. The left-wing policy experts want the government to use the promise of trade protection, financial aid and relaxation of antitrust law to force corporations to invest productively at home. Government bailouts, Kuttner argues, should be seen as public investments in private corporations and should be rewarded by a place on corporate boards. The policy experts also want government to prod corporations to bring labor into the decision-making process. Worker co-determination, Harrison argued, "is not so much an issue of economic justice or the dignity of labor *per se* as it is a matter of cold, hard-headed economics. Corporate management...must increasingly rely on the entire range of employees within the firm to develop new production techniques, judge the applicability and usefulness of new technology, assure quality control, and forge new labor-management relations that enhance productivity and intra-firm equity."

State and local governments play an equally important role in industrial policy. Like the federal government, a city or state government can use its financial or licensing power to demand that business invest in undeveloped regions and neighborhoods and train new workers. As Shearer argued in a paper on urban policy, states and cities can also set up industrial parks and business incubators—buildings with office space and technical and secretarial staff—to stimulate new businesses.

The left-wing experts call for increasing consumer demand both through raising wage rates and strengthening social welfare programs. Kuttner and Faux talked about the need for labor law reform to strengthen unions and their bargaining power; Bob Greenstein, the director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, advocated repairing programs like unemployment compensation that have been eviscerated during the Reagan years; Hartmann called for new child-care and health-care initiatives.

These programs would cost money, but little concern was expressed about increasing the budget deficit. New initiatives, it was assumed, could be financed by cutting military expenditures and by raising the tax rates for the wealthy. An 8 percent shift of military expenditures, James Galbraith estimated, would yield \$20 billion. Galbraith also contended that state and local budget surpluses and continued inflation had minimized and would continue to minimize the effect of federal budget deficits.

Political obstacles: The left-wing program is extremely ambitious and also fraught with peril. Because each part is connected to the other, if one part of the program is adopted but not another, the entire edifice could crumble. For instance, if a new administration succeeds in raising consumer demand but fails to alleviate LDC debt or to gain market concessions from Japan and West Germany, then the U.S. would suffer the same fate François Mitterrand's France did in the early '80s: its exports will be stalled, while its imports will rise; it will suffer inflation (from a declining dollar) and unemploy-

ment.

The program must also overcome political obstacles. Most American bankers oppose significant debt relief. American multinationals and both liberal and conservative policy-makers, including Dukakis' and Jesse Jackson's chief economic advisers, oppose managed international trade. Legislators and much of the public, obsessed with the federal deficit, oppose new social programs. And both Republicans and moderate Democrats like Schultze unequivocally reject industrial policy as an affront to the free market.

At the conference, Green suggested that the left could defray criticism by adopting a new name for industrial policy. "Why call it industrial policy?" Green asked. "If fullback Jones fumbles, why not give it to fullback Smith. Put old wine in new bottles." But Green didn't suggest any label.

Harvard economist Juliet Schor contended that the public's problem with industrial policy was conceptual rather than linguistic. Citing the 1983 defeat in Rhode Island of a referendum on industrial policy, Schor noted that most voters believed it to be "a large corporate hand-out."

Not surprisingly, the participants were divided over what industrial policy means. Kuttner foresees a kind of Swedish version in which a dynamic labor movement shares power with the corporate elite. But as several participants pointed out, the American labor movement is far weaker than Sweden's. Others, like Shearer, seem to hold a model of progressive reform in which enlightened government regulators, responsive to an intelligent public, direct business toward productive ends.

The left-wing policy experts are unlikely to settle these differences before the Democratic convention in Atlanta, let alone before the next Democratic administration takes

INSIDE STORY

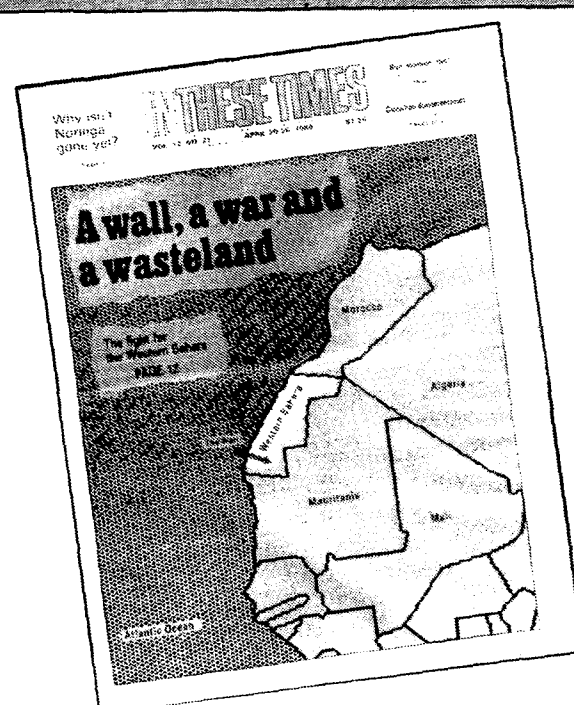
power. They reflect the confusion over economic strategy within the European social democratic parties—long an implicit reference point for American liberals—and the continued weakness in the U.S. of the labor movement and other countervailing institutions. But the debate over austerity and equity, free trade and market sharing, and industrial policy and the free market will nonetheless rage among Democrats. □

CONTENTS

Inside Story: In search of an economic policy for the left	2
Jackson's campaign—how losing is winning	3
In Short	4
Is Kerry's contra-coke probe what it's cracked up to be?	6
John Hull—the missing link in the contra-coke connection?	7
Money-laundering and the Colombia drug cartel	7
Women with AIDS—the controversy over reproductive rights	8
Economic warfare in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute	9
Northern Ireland—1988 has been a very bad year	10
France's presidential-election soap opera	11
The world's biggest dump-site is called the Atlantic	12
Editorial	14
Letters Sylvia	15
Viewpoint: <i>Perestroika</i> and <i>glasnost</i> in East Germany	16
Ashes & Diamonds by Alexander Cockburn	17
Life in the U.S.: Americans and Nicaragua	18
In Print: Doris Lessing's <i>The Fifth Son</i>	19
In the Arts: <i>The Milagro Beanfield War</i>	20
Non-profit radio sponsors	21
Media Beat	21
Classifieds/Life in Hell	23
Dinah Washington, Queen of the Blues	24

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Paper chase. We know it's hard for some of you to part with your copy of *In These Times*, but we'll ask anyway. Due to a printing/mailling error, we didn't receive any office copies of Vol. 12, #21 (April 20-26). So, if you can pass along your copy after you've read it, please send it to us at: Missing Issue, *In These Times*, 1300 West Belmont, Chicago, Ill. 60657. Thanks.

By Dave Lindorff

NEW YORK

JESSE JACKSON LOST THE NEW YORK STATE primary, and with it, the tenuous mantle of front-runner in the campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. But the good news is that in narrowly winning the vote in the five boroughs of New York City, despite the most vicious race-baiting in recent memory by Mayor Ed Koch, Jackson has resurrected politics in that metropolis from the cesspool of corruption and apathy into which it had sunk over the course of three Koch terms.

Jackson came into New York looking like a possible winner. The polls showed him not only close to Michael Dukakis, but closing. On the Sunday before the April 19 primary, the *Daily News* bannered with the headline: "Too Close to Call."

But Jackson wound up not running against Dukakis at all. Dukakis barely mentioned him. Rather, Jackson was forced to run against the mayor, and his "sidekick" Albert Gore. Gore, desperate for help in his dying campaign, sought and accepted an endorsement from Koch, who had already told New Yorkers that Jews would "have to be crazy" to vote for Jackson. After signing on with Gore, Koch began trotting out references to Jackson's "Hymietown" remark in 1984, his "embrace" of Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yassir Arafat and the never proven charge that Jackson had falsely claimed to have been holding Martin Luther King Jr. when he died.

An embarrassed Gore, after pandering to conservative Jewish voters and getting Koch, found himself being dragged around the Big Apple on the mayor's arm while Koch race-baited Jackson.

This situation proved uncomfortable for the Gore campaign staff, and if the expression on Gore's face in TV news coverage of the duo on the stump can be believed, for Gore himself. As a top member of the Gore team commented the day after the New York primary, "Look, when Koch came to us on Friday morning (four days before the primary vote) and said he wanted to endorse



Jackson in New York: despite the loss, his campaign revitalized politics in the Big Apple.

The primary irony: Jesse's New York loss was also a win of sorts

Gore, we were glad. We knew Koch had high negatives in New York, but we were low on money, and going nowhere and we needed something to jump-start the campaign. But I think we underestimated the way the Koch story would supercede the Gore story. It really became a Koch story. And we didn't realize what Koch would be saying about Jesse."

One result of Koch's campaign of hate was a surge in death threats against Jackson, which led to doubled Secret Service protection, and less crowd contact than might have been the case. The other was that Jackson had to spend his time with reporters denying he was anti-Semitic instead of talking about his programs and policies.

Even with this not entirely unexpected wrench thrown into his campaign, Jackson did surprisingly well—perhaps not in terms of what might have been, but compared to 1984, or by any historical standard.

Surprising gains: Despite Koch's and Gore's frantic appeal to the Jewish community, Jackson netted 15 percent of the city's Jewish vote, double his showing in 1984. Perhaps more important, 75 percent of the Jewish vote went to Dukakis, with exit polls showing that many voted for him instead of Gore because they didn't like Koch's divisive campaign. As one 38-year-old Jewish Brooklynite who said he was voting for Dukakis told Jackson during one of the latter's campaign swings through the borough, "I apologize for our mayor."

Upstate, too, Jackson did surprisingly well. In rural Tioga County, for instance, a region of mostly farmers and conservative Republican workers (and with almost no black population), Jackson took 26 percent of the vote. His overall upstate total was 22 percent. Moreover, local Jackson activists upstate say their candidate was proving popular among farmers of both parties, but since most upstate voters are registered Republican, they couldn't vote in the primary under New York rules.

Whatever the outcome of the national primary campaign, it is clear that the Jackson effort in New York—particularly his good showing upstate and his victory over the Koch/Gore team in the city—will reverberate in this state for some time to come. As Jackson himself said on the day of the primary, as it was becoming clear that he would not pull an upset against Dukakis, "In many ways we've already won. We've laid a precedent for change in New York that will be with us for a long time to come."

Upstate, the Rainbow Coalition has become a permanent political fixture. In the 29th Congressional District along the shores of Lake Erie, currently represented by Republican Rep. Frank Horton, a Rainbow chap-

ter has been formed that intends to run local candidates as early as next year. Further south in Tomkins County, Jackson campaign leader Michael Cohen says the Jackson campaign produced so many volunteers—350 to 400—that "at times I didn't have something for everyone to do!"

What all those people—and others like them across the state—will do in November is anybody's guess. But it's not just a matter of how the party treats Jackson, says Cohen. "That's just a symbol of how they're dealing with the issues," he explains. "There are a lot of people in the Jackson campaign who are very unhappy with the way the [Democratic primary] campaign is developing. We know there are a lot of Democratic leaders who are breathing a sigh of relief after New York. It's a bit premature to talk about Dukakis being the nominee, but assuming he was, he'd have to show us that he's worth supporting. This is not just another election. We're putting back a coalition that has been the base of the Democratic Party, but that has been forgotten in recent years."

Meanwhile, in New York, the Jackson plurality—created by the votes of blacks, Hispanics and liberal and left white voters, including Jews, with the strong support of many of the city's large unions—has demonstrated that Koch and what journalists Paul DuBrul and Jack Newfield have termed the "permanent government" of real estate and other business interests can be beaten.

A lesson learned: That lesson has not been lost on those who have been battling the mayor. Says Ruth Messinger, a New York City councilwoman who has already said she is contemplating a run for one of the three city-wide offices (mayor, controller or city council president), "I thought the mayor's behavior in the primary was an embarrassment and source of shame for all New Yorkers, regardless of who they did or didn't endorse. I'm quite clear that he did as much as he could to poison the atmosphere, but whether it was so intended or not, it constituted a fueling of the forces of racial division and tension, and it is of extraordinary importance that the voters of the city not only did not rise to the bait, but by vote and by comment rejected it out of hand. There was a broad coalition that worked quietly and effectively for Jackson. But there was an infinitely broader coalition that was upset and ashamed at how the mayor was trying to set people against each other."

Adds Messinger, "It is becoming clearer and clearer to the people of this city that we are ill served by a chief executive who is so anxious to be center stage that he'll say anything to get there. If the mayor does in fact run for re-election in 1989, it will be up to all those New Yorkers ready for bread rather than circuses to unite to defeat him."

As a shell-shocked member of the Gore campaign in Washington said after the primary, "We went in to New York planning to do politics as usual. But in New York you get caught up in small local and historical battles."

Indeed, by drawing Mayor Koch out on Jackson, Gore stumbled into a historical battle he never expected. But in doing so he inadvertently may have opened the door to the first progressive mayor in New York in decades, and perhaps to the city's first minority mayor. □

Dave Lindorff is a journalist based in Spencer, N.Y.

Jackson may be down, but is he out?

The relief among party leaders and even TV commentators was almost palpable after the votes came in from the New York primary. "Dukakis," the headlines screamed, "Now the Front-runner!"

But not so fast. True, he left New York with just over half the 2,081 delegates he needs to cinch the nomination. But there are other primaries to go, including California and New Jersey, which even in a two-man race could be wild cards.

And what about Al Gore's delegates?

Gore suspended his election bid last week, but campaign insiders say he may yet withdraw from the race.

As a weary Gore staffer observed, if Gore withdraws, many of his at-large delegates from Super Tuesday would go to Jackson. "We're getting a lot of pressure (from Southern white Democratic leaders) not to withdraw," the staffer says.

But everyone in the Gore campaign is aware that if handled right, Gore has a bright political future in national Democratic politics. The problem right now: he has so alienated blacks, an essential con-

stituency in Democratic politics, that he could be ruined unless he can rebuild some bridges. One way, a staffer suggests, would be to directly, or indirectly through a withdrawal, toss his delegates to Jackson.

Another imponderable is what might happen on the convention floor. If Dukakis does not have enough delegates to lock in the nomination going into Atlanta, many of the more liberal delegates from the Simon, Gephardt and Gore camps might jump to Jackson.

Meanwhile, Republican front-runner George Bush seems to be stumbling a bit himself on the way to the prize. Though essentially unopposed in the New York Republican primary last Tuesday—all his opponents save Pat Robertson have withdrawn (and most never made it onto the New York ballot in any event), and Robertson didn't campaign here—he got only 95 percent of the vote state-wide. In some places, like Tompkins County, he fared even worse. There he drew only 75 percent of the vote. —D.L.

By Joel Bleifuss

The middle of the pumpkin

The National Park Service has nominated Whittaker Chambers' Maryland farm for the National Register of Historic Places. Chambers, a former Communist Party member turned *Time* magazine editor, made news on Dec. 2, 1948, when he dramatically led House Un-American Activities Committee investigators out to his garden and over to a pumpkin. The pumpkin, which he had hollowed out that morning, contained microfilmed copies of State Department documents. Chambers claimed Alger Hiss asked him to pass the documents on to a Soviet agent in 1938. On Jan. 20, 1950, Hiss was convicted of perjury and sentenced to five years in prison for denying under oath that he had given Chambers copies of those State Department documents. While Hiss sat in prison, Chambers went on to write his autobiography, *Witness*. According to the Park Service nomination form, *Witness* "portrays in stark terms the contemporary struggle between Communism and freedom.... Among those moved by *Witness* was a recent convert to conservatism, Ronald Reagan, who as president would posthumously honor Chambers with a Medal of Freedom." The Park Service explains that it wants to put the Chambers farm on the Historic Register because "the [Hiss] case heightened public awareness of Communist penetration in the federal government, hardened Cold-War attitudes, and buttressed American conservatism after its long eclipse under the New Deal."

Call it terrorism

On January 27 "In Short" published a list of 12 ways Israel was like South Africa. That list was in response to the Israeli government's press release, "Ten ways Israel is not like South Africa." Although Israel's public-relations gambit has since been scuttled, our list goes on:

13. South Africa and Israel both use political assassination as a method of conflict-resolution. On March 29 in Paris South African agents murdered Dulcie September, an African National Congress diplomat. On April 16 in Tunis Israeli commandos murdered Khalil Wazir, the No. 2 man in the Palestine Liberation Organization. Later that day, residents of the Occupied Territories took to the streets, leaving Israeli troops no choice but to kill 14 of them.

Serfs for a season

Next year U.S. fruit and vegetable growers are planning to import hundreds of thousands of Third-World people to bring in their crops. These indentured peasants, known as "guest workers," will be kept in special camps until the harvest is over and then shipped home. According to Paul Shukovsky of the *Tampa Tribune*, U.S. growers and ranchers already import 23,000 Caribbean and Mexican men each year. These numbers are expected to skyrocket as growers take advantage of a little-used section of immigration law called H2A. H2A allows the agricultural industry to import foreign labor when the government certifies that there are not enough domestic workers available. Industry and government officials maintain that such a labor shortage will soon exist. They argue that many of the 340,000 migrant farmworkers who have applied for citizenship under the amnesty provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 will leave the fields in search of better work.

A surplus of workers with rights

The United Farm Workers (UFW) maintains that there is no shortage of farm labor in the U.S. and that growers like to import H2A laborers in order to avoid the problems that come from domestic workers who have legal rights. H2A workers who attempt to organize can be immediately deported. "There is no shortage of workers," says Vice President Dolores Huerta. "The unemployment statistics for farm workers in the U.S. are double that of industrial workers." She says that in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, 50 percent of all farm workers are unemployed or underemployed. "The employers want to keep this huge surplus of labor so that they can replace any farm worker who tries to improve his conditions," she says. The H2A program requires that before importing foreign labor, the growers must first attempt to recruit domestic workers. The U.S. Department of Labor has ignored that aspect of the law, says Huerta. "[Department officials] have been going around Florida holding meetings in fancy hotels to tell growers how to get H2A workers. The department is doing nothing about getting local farm workers employed."



Hispanic FBI agents take on the 'Mormon Mafia'

LOS ANGELES—The FBI is facing a challenge from within. A top Latino FBI official has gone to court with a class action suit that charges the bureau with racial discrimination. The suit, filed in 1987 by agent Bernardo Perez, has been joined by 250 of the 400 Hispanic agents who work for the FBI.

"There are administrators at the top levels of the FBI, at headquarters in Washington and in the field, and they are bigots," said Perez at a \$500-a-plate fund-raiser earlier this month in Los Angeles. Hosted by Hispanics for the FBI, a group of Los Angeles Latino leaders who support the suit, the dinner raised \$43,000.

For Perez, the formation of the group ends years of isolation. Perez feud, along with his charges of discrimination and religious favoritism within the agency's Los Angeles office, surfaced during the 1985 trial of Richard Miller. Miller, an FBI agent, was convicted of passing classified documents to the Soviet Union. During the trial, Perez testified that his

attempts to fire Miller for incompetence were blocked by the FBI's Los Angeles bureau chief, Richard Bretzing. Both Bretzing and Miller are Mormons.

Perez charged that Bretzing then transferred Miller to a counterintelligence unit headed by Bryce Christensen, another Mormon. This led to allegations of a so-called "Mormon Mafia" within the nation's second-largest FBI office. In the Los Angeles bureau about 50 of the 450 agents belong to the Mormon Church. During Miller's espionage trial, Bretzing testified that he had evoked the Mormon principles of redemption in hopes of getting Miller to confess his crime.

Last month Bretzing announced that he was leaving the FBI's L.A. bureau, which he has headed for the last six years, and going to Salt Lake City to become a security chief for the Mormon Church.

While the Miller case was still in federal court, Perez went to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and charged that Bretzing was anti-Hispanic and anti-Catholic. Perez was then transferred to El Paso, Texas.

Since Perez filed his suit, other

Hispanic agents have come forward to support his charges. Many of them now complain of repercussions. Agent Paul Megallanes says he has been unfairly disciplined for supporting Perez. He says he was stripped of his gun and his car and transferred from the Ventura, Calif., office to Los Angeles.

According to agent Rudolph Valadez, "It was a long time coming for us to admit we were discriminated against, because we did not want to face the fact that we could not rise to the top. We don't have any shortcomings. We are up against institutional bigotry."

One of the organizers of the Los Angeles fund-raiser, businessman Joe Sanchez, says that giving support to the class-action suit was "one of the most difficult decisions I have made in my life." He originally feared the FBI would retaliate against suit supporters via the Internal Revenue Service or Immigration Service. But now, because of the widespread support from Hispanic agents, business leaders and politicians, he thinks that is unlikely. "We're going to win," he says.

The suit goes to trial in El Paso, Texas, in June. —Timothy Stirtion

Sandinistas and contras talk but reach no conclusion

MANAGUA—"Llegaron de azul y blanco" (They arrived in blue and white), proclaimed the headline in the opposition newspaper *La Prensa*. Clothed in the national colors, four of the contras' top political leaders and 45 lesser-known rebels set foot in Managua on April 15, Nicaraguan flag in hand. "This is a great victory for the *Resistencia*," said Alfredo

Cesar, ex-head of the National Bank and perhaps the most influential person on the contra directorate.

As it turned out, this second round of top-level cease-fire negotiations was characterized by the lack of another color—combat green. The absence of contra military leaders at the three days of peace talks clearly contributed to the lack of progress.

During the negotiations it was reported that two of the contra *comandantes* who had figured prominently in the March Sapoa talks that led to the cease-fire were expelled

from the rebel organization for supporting a negotiated settlement. Further, it was common knowledge that the contras' most important military leader, Enrique Bermudez, an ex-colonel in Anastasio Somoza's National Guard, firmly opposes any peace accord.

By sending only their political leaders, the contras were also emphasizing their long-held insistence on simultaneously talking about political substance and a military cease-fire. Just as insistently, the Sandinistas sought to keep the talks

Photo disturbance: "Amy learns her ex-lover has AIDS via the answering machine" and "Kit ends the agony of AIDS" are two of the AIDS-related dramas recently produced by Granby, Conn., artist Laurie Costa. Costa bases her images on real-life stories taken from news clippings, interviews and anecdotes. (She says she has about 1,000 AIDS-related news items on file.) Costa selects key incidents from these sources and writes a script. Professional actors then perform the scenes, which Costa directs and photographs. Although critics have praised Costa's photo-dramas, other reactions are often less positive. "I lost a best friend because of the photographs," says Costa. "She said I was sick and psychotic and asked, 'Why are you doing this?'" Some galleries have rejected Costa's work as unmarketable. "They say, 'We love your work but we can't sell it. Why don't you take it someplace else that's more cutting edge?'" An exhibition of Costa's photo-dramas will open at the Ariel Gallery in New York City next fall.



c 1988 Laurie Costa

to military matters, with discussions of politics to come later.

Despite the series of dialogues held since March 21, neither side is sure of the other's intentions. Until the contras are assured that the government is taking firm steps toward "democratizing" Nicaragua, the contras are refusing to enter the seven cease-fire zones and gradually disarm as was agreed to during the Sapoa talks. The Sandinistas' latest proposal calls for this to occur by July 1.

The Sandinistas worry that the contras are merely buying time. They fear the rebels are using the

talks to give their troops a needed respite before resuming the fighting—possibly with U.S. aid given by a Congress that could blame the Sandinistas for a breakdown in negotiations. For these reasons the government is pushing for a "definitive" end to the war, with complete disarmament by the contras, rather than merely prolonging the temporary truce.

As the talks concluded the two sides agreed to continue in "permanent session" and resume talking April 28. Although they were unable even to finalize technical matters related to seven cease-fire zones into

which the contras have agreed to move, the fact that the meeting happened at all (and in Managua itself) was a positive development.

"It hasn't even been a month since we signed the Sapoa agreement," said Sandinista Gen. Humberto Ortega, head of the government delegation. "This isn't an auto race, the Indy 500, trying to reach 200 miles per hour toward the finish line. Logically the government's hope is to negotiate a definitive cease-fire in the shortest time possible. But in such a complex problem we can't hope for any overnight solution."

—William Gasperini

Exiles detained on return to Guatemala

Hundreds of well-wishers carrying banners and singing chants of welcome were on hand at the Guatemala City airport April 18 to witness the highly publicized return of four leaders of the United Representation of the Guatemala Opposition. The exiles, who had left the country in 1982 after death threats and assassination attempts, were returning home to engage in the "dialogue of national reconciliation" called for by the Central American peace accord.

Others waiting at the airport were not so enthusiastic about the return. A huge contingent of national police surrounded the airport and gave their own greeting to two of the returning opposition leaders. Dr. Rolando Castillo, former dean of the University of San Carlos medical school, and Quiché Indian leader Rigoberta Menchu were immediately separated from their international observer delegations and taken into custody. They were later released unharmed.

The two other returning Guate-

malans, labor lawyer Marta Gloria Torres and human rights attorney Frank LaRue tried to intercede in the arrests of Castillo and Menchu but were shoved aside. "The people who were waiting for us were clobbered and pushed away," says LaRue. According to observers, members of the diplomatic corps were prevented from greeting the returnees at the airport.

With the opposition leaders in custody, a series of decoy police buses set out in several directions to confuse those who would attempt to track the prisoners.

But for Menchu—whose father, mother and brother were killed by government forces—and Castillo, the encounter with the national police turned out to be relatively mild. A Guatemalan judge interrogated the two for four hours about "acts against the state" that they were alleged to have committed in 1981. The judge found no merit to those charges and freed Menchu and Castillo, who were greeted outside the courtroom by hundreds of cheering students. Menchu later told the students that she was "proud" of them and happy to be home.

LaRue says he believes the detentions were an unsuccessful attempt to intimidate members of the delegation and others in exile who are considering returning home to test the waters of democracy. Guatemala has had civilian rule since 1986.

LaRue, who left Guatemala after being hunted by military death squads, said the group will continue its work as planned. "We came because of the peace plan. What we're here for is to see what type of an opening, what measures of democratization are being taken and, ultimately, what kind of participation we can all have." The delegation, which will spend a week in Guatemala, has conducted "bilateral meetings with all sectors of society."

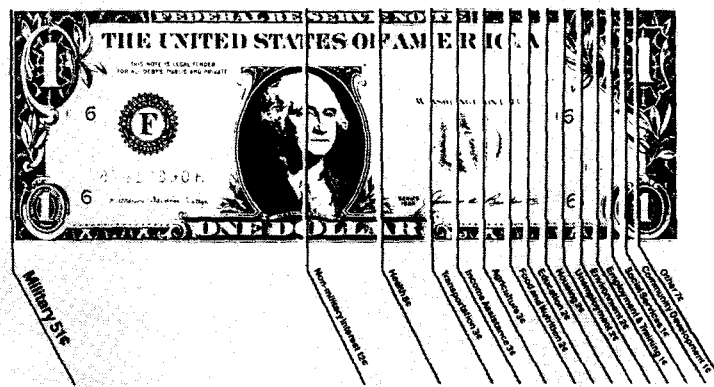
Though the tenseness of the situation has subsided since the airport arrests, LaRue thinks the delegation is still at risk. "There have been leaflets from right-wing death squads threatening the government for letting us in. There has been some destruction at the main offices of the airlines that brought us on the first night. So there's every reason that we should, to say the least, be cautious."

—Dennis Bernstein

The Boulder 10

In an attempt to control anti-apartheid activity, the University of Colorado tried to ban 10 non-students from the campus. One of those non-students was later found on campus and arrested. On March 27 these non-students—now known as the "Boulder 10"—were among 23 demonstrators arrested when police came to tear down an anti-apartheid shantytown. University officials had charged that the shanties were erected without the requisite building permit and posed a fire hazard. The shantytown had been built to protest the university's South African investment policy. The university's board of regents has a policy of "selective divestment"—which means investing only in companies that promise to fight apartheid by legal means and to better the lot of non-white South Africans. University officials have since decided that the non-students "did not appear to pose an immediate threat" to the university. They rescinded the "emergency" ban and dropped charges against the one non-student who was arrested.

What a 1988 tax dollar buys



The Reagan administration maintains that only 27 percent of the U.S. budget goes to the military. But according to the National Jobs for Peace Campaign, the Pentagon eats up 51 cents of each income-tax dollar. The discrepancy is due to the fact that the government calculates its 27 percent figure by excluding the cost of past wars, foreign military aid and the defense segment of NASA's budget. The government's overall budget figure also includes the cost of Social Security—non-discretionary funds that are separate from the income tax. Social Security was first added to the federal budget pie by the Johnson administration in an attempt to hide the costs of the Vietnam War. Similar obfuscation continues under a Reagan administration that tries to conceal the fact that U.S. military spending has increased from \$140 billion in 1980 to almost \$300 billion today—a buildup that has been directly financed by cuts in social programs.



HEARINGS

Sen. John Kerry, with staff member, leads the investigation into contra-drug allegations.

Is Kerry's contra-cocaine probe what it's been cracked up to be?

By Jim Naureckas

CONTRA OPPONENTS HAD LOOKED TO CONGRESSIONAL hearings in early April for a full-scale investigation into charges that the Nicaraguan rebels were involved in drug trafficking. But Sen. John Kerry (D-MA), the lawmaker responsible for the probe, took pains to make clear that his Senate Foreign Relations narcotics subcommittee's hearings were not intended only to explore contra-drug ties.

"I want to emphasize that these hearings

are about the larger aspect of narcotics and narcotics trafficking," he said during the April 4-7 hearings. "What I really hope to do is underscore the way in which clandestine efforts, private aid networks, were taken advantage of by the narcotics process."

Kerry, a consistent opponent of U.S. contra aid, is the one member of Congress who has shown any initiative in investigating allegations that U.S.-backed contras used proceeds from cocaine and marijuana smuggling to fund their war against Nicaragua. But his hearings have so far disappointed many ob-

servers.

Kerry's apparent assumption that the "private aid networks" were "taken advantage of," critics say, overlooks evidence that showed it was the contras and their U.S. associates who were exploiting drug traffickers, not the other way around. Critics also complain that Kerry missed an opportunity to ask the most important question: why was an administration that was waging a "war on drugs" apparently covertly involved with international drug traffickers?

Kerry's cautious management of the hearings was praised by Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY), who participated in the hearings although he is not a subcommittee member. If D'Amato, a pro-contra senator, thought his support would dissuade Kerry from any serious condemnation of the contras, the strategy worked: "Kerry's rhetoric was almost indistinguishable from that of D'Amato," notes Larry Birns of the liberal Council on Hemispheric Affairs.

Bigger fish to fry? In Kerry's defense, supporters say that the hearings are carefully building the groundwork for further investigations that will cut much deeper—possibly all the way to Vice President George Bush. Documented evidence already indicates Bush has ties to Felix Rodriguez, Oliver North's man in El Salvador. And a major drug figure testified in earlier Kerry hearings that he gave Rodriguez \$10 million in drug profits for the contras. Kerry plans to call Rodriguez in future hearings.

So the fireworks may still come. But thus far, the Kerry hearings have followed in the footsteps of the Iran-contra committee, whose failure to deal with contra-drug evidence necessitated Kerry's investigation. The Iran-contra committee focused on why Congress wasn't informed about the administration's covert actions, not on why those covert actions were going on in the first place. Kerry's focus on the international drug cartel also misses the big picture: how a U.S. foreign policy, based on subterfuge and carried out by people with criminal associations, inevitably led to drug traffickers.

The Massachusetts lawmaker missed a chance to raise exactly that issue when he interviewed contra leader Octaviano Cesar, who took \$4 million or \$5 million from a major cocaine dealer at a time when the Reagan administration was covertly aiding the contras in violation of the Boland

"How can you not tread on the CIA when the point is to show that the CIA was in collusion with drug smugglers?"

Amendment. The videotaped interview of Cesar—the brother of Alfredo Cesar, one of the five current contra directors—was played at the hearings.

"I don't want to get overly moralistic here or something," Kerry told Cesar. "But I want to ask you the question because you talk about your need...to support your effort.... What happens if the results of the taking of that money are that more kids die on the streets of American cities because they take drugs?"

"I'm not proud of that, but we just didn't have any choice," Cesar responded. "I mean, the U.S. Congress didn't give us any choice." He went on to explain that the alternative was allowing the Sandinistas to murder *campesinos*.

Kerry didn't rebut Cesar's Oliver North-style apology, but he did comment: "I personally liked Octaviano Cesar, and respect him in many ways, and he's a very committed person. But obviously, as he himself said, that doesn't excuse what he's done."

Poor little contras: Yet wasn't Kerry's claim that the contras were "taken advantage of" just such an excuse? If so, it was a poor one. The testimony of convicted traffickers George Morales and Gary Betzner shattered the illusion that the contras were innocent victims of the narco-traffickers' plots.

"These gentlemen [Octaviano Cesar and his comrades] approached me seeking assistance, financial assistance, military assistance," testified Morales. "They said that because they had personal knowledge of Washington, that they perhaps could do something about my indictment." He was referring to the drug charges that led to his conviction and current imprisonment.

As a result of the meeting, Morales gave millions of dollars directly to Cesar and his associates. The deal, according to Morales, also allowed the contras to use the drug network's airlift capacities to get into the cocaine trade themselves.

At the contras' request, Morales twice sent his pilot, Betzner, from Florida to Costa Rica

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with loads of weapons provided by the contras. Betzner testified that he landed at remote airstrips where he was met by John Hull, an admitted CIA agent who, according to administration documents, was in charge of the contras' "southern front" operations in Costa Rica.

Hull's people, said Morales and Betzner, replaced the weapons with duffel bags full of cocaine—at least \$10 million worth on one trip. Betzner testified that he then flew the bags back to Florida and handed them over to the contras' distributors in the U.S.

Kerry surely knew about these allegations when he interviewed Cesar. Yet the senator did not confront the contra leader about the charges. And when Cesar asserted, "I was

never involved in drug trafficking," Kerry responded, "I know that. I understand that."

Straight dope: The hearings produced little new information. Most of the important witnesses Kerry brought forward had already been interviewed last year by *In These Times* and CBS' *West 57th*. These witnesses were dismissed by administration supporters as convicts looking for sentence reductions.

This makes the testimony of Gen. Paul Gorman—former chief of the U.S. Southern Command in Panama and a source skeptics can't write off—perhaps the most important new piece of evidence from the hearings.

Kerry quoted from Gorman's closed testimony: "There were fairly sizable marijuana operations on the southern front, in Nicara-

gua, some involving the contras, some not." Kerry did not elaborate on this surprising confirmation of contra drug involvement.

The hearings failed to capitalize on other opportunities to break new ground. Kerry's public questioning of Michael Palmer, a drug pilot who had worked with both the U.S. government and the contras, was rendered useless by Kerry's promise to Senate intelligence committee chief David Boren (D-OK) not to expose the CIA front companies that Palmer had worked with.

The relationship between the contras, cocaine and the CIA is still murky. Both Hull and Cesar appear to have had strong links to the intelligence agency. But Kerry's deal with Boren seems to preclude following

those leads. Complains Peter Kornbluh of the National Security Archive, an independent research group: "How can you not tread on the CIA when the point is to show that the CIA was in collusion with drug smugglers?"

Kerry's committee may yet provide official confirmation of involvement in drug smuggling by the contras and Reagan administration officials. But Kerry seems pessimistic that proof of the connection will have a strong political impact. "I don't think it will alter the contra debate per se," he told the *Worcester (Mass.) Magazine*. "The fact is that there's no showing that they're doing it today. This was two years ago when it counted in terms of the outside funding." □

Money-launderer explains drug money's global reach

By Anne-christine d'Adesky

WASHINGTON, D.C.

IT WAS THE KIND OF INFORMATION FAMED FRENCH Inspector Clouseau would appreciate: how to carry a million dollars stuffed inside a suitcase through an airport. "It's very simple," testified money-launderer Ramon Milian-Rodriguez during the April 4-7 Senate Foreign Relations Committee narco-

HEARINGS

terrorism hearings in Washington, chaired by Sen. John Kerry (D-MA).

As an impressed Kerry inspected the suitcase, Rodriguez outlined its special features, including a hidden trunk he used to transport professionally banded \$100 bills from Miami

to Panama during his heyday as the Medellin drug cartel's prime cash courier. Rodriguez estimated that a million dollars weighs about 120 pounds.

Kerry said he called the hearings "to look at the impact of the cartel and the impact of narcotics trafficking on our foreign policy." What emerged from the week-long testimony of drug dealers was a clear picture of how enmeshed U.S. foreign policy has sometimes become in the drug cartel's multi-billion-dollar criminal network during the Reagan tenure. Moreover, the cartel's web extends into U.S. communities, from urban centers like New York to small towns in Georgia where cocaine-and-cash operations are in full bloom.

According to U.S. investigators, money

laundering has become a major industry in the Caribbean over the past decade. Panama, the Cayman Islands, Curacao and the Bahamas are among countries whose loose banking laws have allowed for an unregulated flow of drug cash—much of it moving freely into secret bank accounts and back out into legitimate businesses.

One top Senate investigator put it this way: "The Colombian cartel has become the most important force in the region, with an incredible power to corrupt governments." He added, "The profits are just staggering."

Hooked on drug money: A recent three-year U.S. government inquiry into global money laundering indicated that Colombian cocaine rings laundered some \$275 million through some 40 Panamanian banks between 1984-1987. Today the cartel appears to have infiltrated Haiti, Costa Rica, Honduras and Brazil, according to Rodriguez, who said that corruption of Caribbean officials throughout the region was high despite international and domestic enforcement efforts. Rodriguez added that the recent closure of Panamanian banks had spurred Uruguay and Paraguay to open new banks to launder the cartel's cash, while Costa Rica's proposed international financial zone would become another cartel asset. "These countries cannot do without the drug cash," he said.

A certified public accountant, Rodriguez said the Medellin cartel is best compared to a huge multinational with major investments in the Caribbean and the U.S. In Latin America the cartel owns local banks, radio and TV stations, soccer teams, auto agencies and construction companies, he explained. Meanwhile, Citicorp and Bank of America were two of many U.S. banking centers he used to launder money from cocaine sales.

Those profits have also bankrolled the contras, making money-laundering an operation with ties to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Rodriguez and others testified that CIA operatives new that millions of the cartel's drug money was given to the contras (see accompanying story). Several witnesses testified that they received CIA contracts or "loans" that allowed them to import and sell Colombian cocaine for cash in the U.S., then launder the profits in Panama and use the cash to buy weapons for the contras.

The network of Caribbean banks and currency-exchange houses now under investigation by U.S. officials for laundering activities are in some instances the same institutions that funnelled the cartel's contra-designated cash. Meanwhile, dozens of regional military officials implicated in drug activities helped the contra effort by providing the drug pilots with logistical support.

Kerry refrained from closely probing the CIA's role in regional money laundering,

leaving this question unanswered: to what extent has the contra connection affected U.S. enforcement efforts against money launderers and military drug dealers?

Rodriguez said the Medellin cartel laundered \$12 billion in profits from 1979 to 1983 under his stewardship. Rodriguez' career ended abruptly in 1983 with his arrest and subsequent 43-year sentence; that year, he said he laundered \$2 billion for the cartel.

Big, big business: The cartel, according to Rodriguez, "is a growing concern" run by extremely wealthy, college-educated managers who oversee a daily cash flow of \$50 million to \$100 million in drug profits. Much of that money is literally carried through airports by a private network of couriers using the infamous black suitcases. Other, less pedestrian means include wire transfers, bank loans and third-party deposits of the "black money" into the under-regulated European money markets.

The narco-traffickers essentially manipulate the existing international banking system. Rodriguez cited a typical laundering operation in which he would deposit \$20 million cash into the umbrella National Bank of Panama. Then he would personally inform personnel at five other Panamanian banks about the transfer of \$5 million into existing accounts held by the cartel at each of these banks. This method was used "to keep knowledge of the accounts from the National Bank of Panama," said Rodriguez. "Every step was compartmentalized," he explained, adding, "In this way there was no audit trail; we completely did away with it."

An issue now facing the Congress is what the U.S. can do to stop the cartel. When asked at the hearings by Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY) if the U.S. was losing the war on drugs, Rodriguez was blunt: "You have lost the war, sir," he told D'Amato. Rodriguez added that international anti-drug enforcement efforts have been compromised by the bribery and corruption among U.S. Customs and other enforcement officials who turn a blind eye to financial irregularities.

Also significant is the cartel's manipulation of banking regulations, whereby procedures to limit laundering have instead assisted the cartel. An example Rodriguez cited is a law outlawing cash deposits into Panamanian banks of more than \$10,000 per deposit. He said he once filed the requisite 47-90 Currency Transaction report indicating he was carrying \$2 million into Panama. A Customs official accepted the form and filed it without noting the discrepancy.

"There is nothing in the system to follow up Form 47-90," said Rodriguez, who added with a smile, "I always filed forms." □

Anne-christine d'Adesky writes regularly about Caribbean issues for *In These Times* and is a reporter with WBAI's *Contragate* program.

IN THESE TIMES APRIL 27-MAY 3, 1988 7

John Hull: a reluctant witness for Kerry

By Dennis Bernstein & Peter Shinkle

ONE WITNESS SEN. JOHN KERRY WOULD like to hear from is John Hull, an American living in Costa Rica who has been linked to contra drug-smuggling charges. Kerry's narcotics subcommittee subpoenaed Hull eight months ago, but Hull has avoided testifying by staying out of the U.S.

Although Hull has admitted that he has worked with the CIA and the contras in Costa Rica, he denies he was involved in either military activities or cocaine smuggling. But Costa Rica arrested a dozen mercenaries for taking part in raids against Nicaragua from one of the ranches that Hull manages. Hull was investigated for violations of the U.S. Neutrality Act by the U.S. attorney's office in Miami. A federal prosecutor placed Hull in a chain of command just under Lt. Col. Oliver North's deputy, Robert Owen.

The Neutrality Act investigations brought no indictments, reportedly after pressure had been brought on the Miami U.S. attorney by the Reagan Justice Department. But Kerry began investigating Hull when information about activities on Hull's ranches reached his office in late 1985.

A search of U.S. Customs computers and files in November 1986 found 293 "matches" for the name John Hull, according to a recently declassified letter that Kerry's subcommittee released at the April hearings. The meaning of the computer matches is not yet fully known, but Kerry is investigating

them further. The letter, written by a Treasury official to an official in the Public Integrity section of the Justice Department, said the search was conducted after Kerry's subcommittee named Hull and others in a report released in the summer of 1986.

Kerry said the letter was classified after it was received by the Justice Department, and he has requested an explanation of the department's actions in the matter.

Testimony by drug trafficker George Morales and others has implicated Hull in wider involvement in narcotics and weapons trafficking. Testifying in July 1987 before Kerry's committee, Morales said his pilots refueled "many times" at Hull's ranch. Morales also said Hull's ranch was "well known" by Morales' Colombian drug trafficking associates as a "facility for refueling [drug flights] and storing drugs."

A mercenary arrested in March 1985 while working on a ranch managed by Hull said he guarded large quantities of cocaine on the ranch. The mercenary, Steven Carr, told reporters Hull hired him in Florida to train contras, but in February 1985 he was assigned to guard a small warehouse in which he saw boxes full of the drug.

Hull has also become the focus of an investigation into drug-trafficking by the Costa Rican government, which is facing a growing drug problem that some officials trace back to contra activities in their country. □

Dennis Bernstein is the executive producer of WBAI's *Contragate* program. Peter Shinkle is *Contragate*'s Washington correspondent.



Gloria Smith, one of about 30,000 HIV-infected New York City women of child-bearing age.

AIDS raises new questions about reproductive rights

By Carol Brown

IN A TRADE NEWSLETTER LAST SUMMER, OBSTETRICIANS and gynecologists predicted that as the number of babies born with AIDS increases, a "previously unthinkable" policy may be given serious consideration: involuntary sterilization of women affected with the virus.

In New York and California, where testing blood samples of newborns is currently the first and only measure of the spread of the deadly HIV virus among the heterosexual population at large, health departments talk about testing all pregnant women and mandatory pre-marital screening for AIDS. But health-care professionals working in communities most highly impacted—those having poor minorities where drug abuse is widespread—fear that in the zeal to control the illness, basic individual freedoms will be overlooked, particularly for women. Some

even see it as a new front in the battle for women's reproductive rights.

"Every woman has the right to do what she wants with her own body. Our job is to educate them," says Dr. Janet Mitchell,

WOMEN

who runs a clinic for pregnant drug abusers out of Beth Israel Hospital in Boston. "We should support whatever their choice is, even when there's a chance they'll have an HIV-infected baby."

But Mitchell sees the threat to that freedom of choice as a real one. Having sat on several AIDS policy-making panels—including the committee that established the federal guidelines for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)—she reports that on every one there is a large, vocal group of experts arguing for mandatory abortion and sterilization. Even though more moder-

ate forces usually prevail, it often ends up "in a knock-down, drag-out fight," she says.

And while Mitchell believes that the public policies established so far are good—most call for high-risk women to be tested, to practice safe sex and to defer pregnancy—she fears that in the hands of the wrong person they can lead to abuse.

She tells the story of a 19-year-old drug user who called a community group to find out what a hysterectomy was. Concluding that she was at high risk for AIDS, a doctor suggested she have the operation, but didn't fully explain what it entailed and what its consequences were. "Some people have their own hidden agendas," says Mitchell.

Others think that public policies are unrealistic, placing responsibility for the spread of the disease on women who generally get little, if any, health care and don't really understand their risk for AIDS.

Learning too late: By all estimates, many more women are infected with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus—the virus that causes AIDS) than actually have the symptoms of the illness. Some don't know they are at risk—unknowingly having contracted the virus from sexual partners who are bisexual or IV drug users, or simply not hearing the message that health departments are trying to communicate. Others deny their risk. But whatever the reason, many health-care workers who deal with children with AIDS report that most of the mothers they see learn they are infected only after they give birth and their babies become ill.

Some medical experts are arguing for mandatory abortion and sterilization of women with AIDS.

"The CDC's policy that HIV-infected women should postpone or avoid pregnancy is a statement in the wind, if they're not going to deal with the fact that most women don't know they're seropositive (HIV-infected) or their partners are seropositive or even know what the threat of AIDS is," says Suki Ports, the vice chair for the National Minority AIDS Council.

Still, the numbers are growing at an alarming rate. The CDC reports to date only 709 cases of pediatric AIDS transmitted perinatally across the nation. But epidemiologists in New York City—where the illness is most widespread among any heterosexual population in the country—estimate that approximately 30,000 women of child-bearing age are HIV-infected in that city (see accompanying story). With 4 to 6 percent of those women giving birth each year, they project between 800 and 1,000 babies being born infected in New York City this year alone.

But the question of transmission of the virus between mother and child is not a simple one. In fact, it is by no means a foregone conclusion that an infected mother will pass the virus to her unborn child.

The rate of transmission of the virus from mother to child in New York City runs at 40 percent, according to the city's AIDS surveillance team. Smaller studies of select groups of women show rates running from 30 to 70 percent. And there's no way to know which mothers will infect their babies. Doctors can't even agree on whether the virus is

transmitted to the fetus in the mother's womb or at the baby's birth. So even when women do know they are carriers of the HIV virus, their choice is not necessarily an easy one. Sometimes personal feelings outweigh the risks involved.

"It depends on how you look at it, whether you see the glass half-empty or half-full," says Mitchell, explaining why some women decide to take the risk of possibly giving the virus to their babies. "In Hispanic and black cultures pregnancy is looked upon as a positive thing. And pregnancy is the one time in an IV drug abuser's life when she feels good about herself."

Keeping the baby: But figures on the number of women who, knowing they test positive for the AIDS virus, choose to become pregnant and carry their babies to full term are hard to come by. Dr. Peter Selwyn is following a group of 100 pregnant, IV drug users through a methadone program at Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx—one of the largest studies of high-risk pregnant women in the country. Of the approximately 20 women who knew they were seropositive early enough in their pregnancies to have a choice, 40 percent chose to continue.

For many, says Selwyn, the possibility that their babies might be born with the infection seemed less pressing than more immediate survival problems. Some feared their husbands might desert them if they knew they were infected with AIDS. One woman even arranged an abortion and then told her husband she had miscarried. A few had trouble making "reasoned decisions."

One patient, for example, lived in a drug "shooting gallery," was frequently strung out on cocaine and beaten regularly by her husband. For her, says Selwyn, "the threat of a theoretical disease was a distant notion." She continued her pregnancy hoping it would mollify her husband.

But others find the maternal instinct too powerful to ignore. Ellie (a pseudonym) found out she had AIDS when she was eight months pregnant—too late for an abortion. Even though her first husband died several years earlier of AIDS, she admits that she denied she was at risk. But looking back on it, she says she doesn't think her choice would have been different even if she had known she had AIDS early enough to terminate her pregnancy.

Her second husband—the baby's father—died when Ellie was only two months pregnant, after being attacked in a subway mugging. So for Ellie, the daughter she subsequently had was "the only thing I had left from the man who was the love of my life," she says.

Even harder to overlook is the fact that her daughter Monica, now two, doesn't have AIDS. "I get a lot of strength from my daughter. She gives me a lot to live for," says Ellie, who only now is beginning to feel some symptoms of the virus infecting her body.

Selwyn points out that while some people want to stop these women from having babies, taking an authoritarian approach and prescribing a uniform course of action ultimately won't work. "You wouldn't have any credibility in the community where you want to have an effect. You have to try to approach women where they are—and try to empower them to make their own decisions," he says. "At the same time you don't want to minimize the risk."

Jane (a pseudonym) tested positive for AIDS when she was just 20 weeks pregnant and was devastated by the results. She says

Continued on page 22

New York women tested anonymously

Although the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommend that all women at high risk for AIDS—IV drug users; partners of IV drug users, bisexuals or hemophiliacs; prostitutes; women who live in communities where there is a high prevalence of AIDS in women; and blood recipients—be counselled and offered testing. Many women who are HIV infected don't know it. In order to find out if she is HIV positive a woman has to choose to be tested independently—either at her own request at a community testing site or at the recommendation of a doctor or social worker. So far, the testing of the population at large has all been done anonymously.

The New York City health department recently did a random test of blood samples from women seeking first trimester abortion and babies delivered in city hospitals. (The test for AIDS is actually a test for antibodies to the virus. Since newborns receive all their mother's antibodies, testing babies is a good indicator of whether the mother is infected or not.)

The goal of the New York City test was to determine how widespread the virus was among women of reproductive age.

The health department wanted to target their educational and testing campaigns at populations highly impacted and make long-term plans for health-care facilities. But no effort was made to notify those women who tested positive.

With fear of discrimination against AIDS patients and carriers of the virus high, the test was set up in such a way that it was impossible for even the health department to identify the donor of each blood sample.

The reason for the anonymity, says Dr. Isaac Weisfuse of the New York City AIDS surveillance team, was a conscious effort to protect the confidentiality of the people in the study. "[The test] was not meant to have a negative impact," says Weisfuse. "No one feels confident in the government knowing what their blood test is. We don't want to keep lists."

In fact, when a doctor diagnoses a case of AIDS—only after specific criteria for symptoms have been met—he or she must report it to local health authorities. But as Dr. Weisfuse points out, a positive HIV test "is not a reportable phenomena to either the city or the state." —C.B.

By Joe Lockard

THE FOUR-MONTH-OLD PALESTINIAN UPRISING has triggered a major economic struggle in which siege walls are being constructed by Palestinians and Israelis. The results of that contest may prove crucial in determining the outcome of the ongoing deadlock.

Complementing their policy of intensified military confrontation in the Occupied Territories, Israeli authorities are searching for economic tactics to undermine popular Palestinian support of the uprising. Palestinian leaders in turn are stressing self-sufficiency.

No-growth colony: The West Bank and Gaza have "Third-World" economies that suffer from low income levels and negligible growth rates. In addition, local businesses are largely undercapitalized and labor-intensive. From 1980-85 the Gross Domestic Product grew annually by only 0.5 percent. Some 37 percent of the West Bank's work force commutes to Israeli jobs, as do more than half of Gaza's workers. Although standards of living have risen considerably since Israel's 1967 conquest, Palestinian workers in Israel earn approximately half the salaries of their Israeli counterparts. Workers remaining inside the West Bank and Gaza lag far behind even this standard. Per capita consumption is less than 30 percent of the Israeli figure.

Israeli economist Simha Bahiri views Israel as "the core economy, its industry as the core industry, and the Occupied Territories as the colonial or peripheral economy." The political efforts by Israel's right-wing Likud coalition—assisted by the Labor Party—to effectively annex the territories to Israel have had a radical impact. The territories are Israel's second-largest export market, after the U.S. Prior to the uprising, 90 percent of imported goods originated in Israel. The result has been a "binational economy" in which the "Green Line"—the 1967 border—has virtually disappeared.

The Palestinian plan: Palestinian strategists are seeking to disengage the economies of the West Bank and Gaza from Israel's economy as much as possible. They've circulated leaflets in the territories promoting a general strike as a national weapon. They called on Palestinians to resign from government employment and all jobs in Israel. The strategists envision "returning" workers being absorbed into the local economy, re-construction of declining local agriculture and self-sufficiency.

Most sectors of the Israeli economy report that relatively few Palestinian workers are either willing or able to report to work. In addition, around 2-3 percent of the Palestinian workers, including many prime wage-earners, are currently being detained in army prisons.

Israel's textile industry has been hardest hit by the general strike. It relies heavily on piecework subcontractors in the territories, who employ village women and pay daily wages of less than \$5, the lowest wage rate of any Israeli industrial sector. Many firms also sell most or all of their goods in the territories. But because of the general strike, textile and clothing sales have dropped 50 percent from 1987, a loss of at least \$25 million to date. Israel's Ministry of Industry and Trade is now considering establishing a special export fund to support threatened textile concerns by

Economic warfare in the Occupied Territories

facilitating overseas marketing.

Sharp drops have also been reported in building material sales due to the construction stoppages both in the territories and Israel. Before the uprising, half of Israel's construction labor force arrived daily from the territories.

The general strike has also had a severe effect on the service industry. The Hotel Owners Association has threatened to fire

MIDEAST

and blacklist striking Palestinian cleaning and food service workers. Even Jerusalem's Biblical Zoo has required long overtime hours from its Jewish staff in order to cope with the absence of its Arab zookeepers.

The entire force of the more than 500 tax-collection employees working in the territories has resigned, and several hundred Arab policemen have quit as well. Also hundreds of sanitation workers in Tel Aviv and southern towns have not shown up for their jobs.

As if Israel's domestic problems were not enough, the European Parliament delivered a major blow on March 9 when it rejected a \$125 million agricultural trade agreement with Israel because of its harsh actions in the Occupied Territories. Another reason for the rejection was Israel's failure to implement an accord permitting direct export of Palestinian agricultural products to the European Economic Community. Israel continues to enforce its ban on Palestinian exports to Western Europe in order to prevent market competition—a ban that probably will not be lifted until the Israeli government is satisfied with the situation. Israeli agricultural organizations are demanding a multi-million-dollar support program to compensate for the loss of the trade agreement benefits.

Israel's countermeasures: In face of these difficulties, Israel has established a government-industry committee to estimate the effects of the uprising and coordinate economic stabilization measures. Israel has not yet come up with a comprehensive economic policy against the uprising, but the Ministry of Finance says that no additional funds can be allocated from the already overstretched national budget to cover the additional security expenses from it.

Most administrative measures implemented have originated in the Ministry of Defense and its "civil" administration in the terri-

ties.

The Israeli government has banned foreign transfers in an effort to block the inflow of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) monies that support the uprising and provide financial underwriting for mass resignations by civil servants and policemen. Palestinian money-changers, who supply many financial services in the absence of a credible local banking system, have been forbidden to travel to Jordan.

Israel has also cut international telecommunications to the territories, as well as domestic phone lines to Gaza and selected West Bank districts. Telex lines to West Bank industrial and trading firms are dead. In addition to the normal strict censorship of the print media, the Israeli government closed more than a score of printing shops to prevent printing of leaflets.

In extreme instances, Israel has shut off electricity and utilities. In the West Bank town of Katibye, where a suspected Israeli collaborator was lynched, electricity, water, supplies and access road were cut off indefinitely.

Ariel Sharon, Israel's trade and industry minister, has authorized the import of an initial 5,000 Portuguese and Romanian workers to substitute for absent Palestinian employees. He said that the move should not be seen as a Palestinian victory, but rather as an indication that Arab laborers are replaceable.

Other tough economic proposals include closing the bridges to Jordan and revoking the business licenses of striking East Jerusalem shops.

A matter of survival: Can Palestinians in the territories develop an alternative economic structure under the weight of such Israeli pressure?

"If you look at it as a European-style economy, we cannot survive," says Mubarak Awad, a pacifist Palestinian leader who studied at a Mennonite college in the U.S. "We have to go back to basics. The capital that we have will not permit us to continue a consumer lifestyle." Awad, founder of the Palestinian Center for the Study of Non-Violence, has spent several years advocating Palestinian economic autonomy from Israel. Much of this thinking is now being echoed, even copied in its wording, in leaflets printed since the uprising began.

"Chickens and eggs are important," Awad says. "Every home should have five to 10 chickens. We have to sustain ourselves, not

make money."

The center is organizing cottage-industry projects in villages, making pickles, jams and other food items. Other such efforts are becoming increasingly popular. Long before the uprising one Bethlehem University professor began developing family-based small industry cooperatives, and foreign development organizations in the territories have started up similar programs.

Transfers from abroad, which account for as much as 40 percent of disposable income, may prove increasingly vital in sustaining Palestinians. While large PLO institutional transfers from Jordan may be blocked, many middle-class West Bank residents keep foreign bank accounts. Palestinian sources suggest that the Israeli ban on transfers can be overcome, especially with the assistance of family members in North and South America. Still, Awad opposes transfers for more than economic survival, pointing out that "if you receive a foreign transfer in order to build a house, you have to buy Israeli cement. The authorities would not allow construction of a Palestinian-owned cement factory."

Palestinian economic links to the outside present a can't-win situation for the Israeli authorities. On one hand, those links now sustain Palestinian economic resistance. Yet on the other hand, if Israel severs the links, Arabs in the Occupied Territories will suffer hardship, but their isolation will enhance national unity. Thus the decision of the Israeli military to entirely close off the West Bank and Gaza for three days surrounding Land Day on March 29 serves Palestinian purposes as well. Israel's economy can't profit from cheap Palestinian labor and the Israeli Defense Force is enforcing an effective reverse transfer of labor back into low-paying but local economic activity, especially agriculture.

"It might be very hard if they close the bridges to Jordan," says Awad. "But I hope they do it. Sometimes the Israelis have been acting very stupidly. Closing the bridges would gain us the richer part of the Palestinian population, which hasn't been interested in joining the uprising because they want to keep receiving import/export licenses and keep going to Amman. If the bridges are closed they have nothing to lose."

Awad estimates that the Occupied Territories can hold on economically for another nine months, with villages lasting much longer. Refugee camps may face the worst economic straits, but grants from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East can prolong their coping ability.

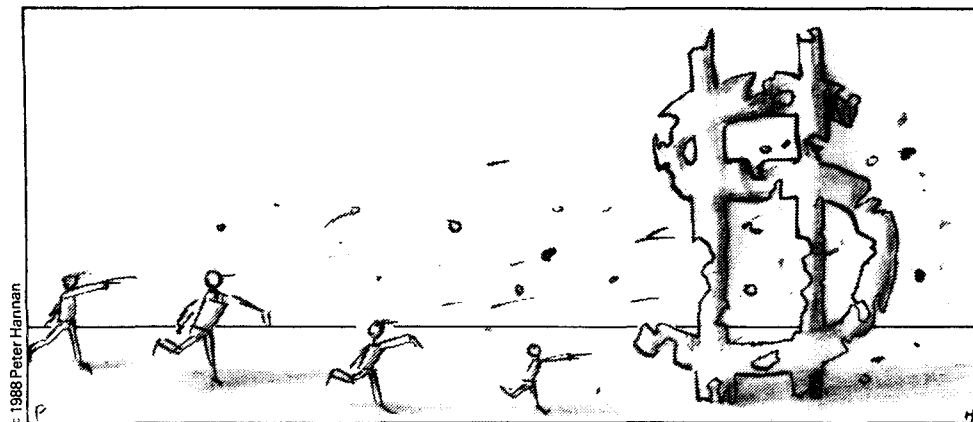
Other observers offer a pessimistic view of the current situation. "Sure, you can't find Israeli cigarettes in Arab stores now," says one Palestinian. "The front of the village is blocked off with stones, too. But many are sneaking out the side to work in Israel, to get money there to keep going. They're supporting the strike on Israeli money."

Thus the near-term prognosis appears grim for the Palestinians. If political developments cannot break the economic siege, the already-weak finances of the Occupied Territories may be gutted in the coming months.

"What keeps this uprising going is a sense of pride," says Awad. "I think that's why the Israelis cannot deal with us—because we have a fire in our hearts."

Joe Lockard is a Jerusalem-based writer.

IN THESE TIMES APRIL 27-MAY 3, 1988 9





Sally MacErlean (left) points to a photo of her son, Thomas, who was murdered during a West Belfast funeral.

By Laura Flanders

BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

MURDER, MAYHEM AND MADNESS" IS A phrase popularly used here to describe the first four months of 1988. After a series of funerals—each leading directly to the next—flags are flying at half mast in all parts of town; mourning is the mood of the day and a general depression hovers like the army helicopters over loyalist and nationalist communities alike.

This year marks the anniversary of the first marches for civil rights for Catholics in Ireland's six British-ruled northern counties. And people on both sides of the political divide maintain that the situation is as bad today as it has been at any time since the so-called "troubles" began 20 years ago. On this, at least, all sides agree.

A very bad year: British commentators have spent three years trying to convince the world that things are looking up in Northern Ireland, thanks to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, a 1985 pact that gave the Republic of Ireland a say in governing its northern neighbor. But now even these commentators admit that 1988 has already been devastating for Ulster.

The year kicked off with the British attorney general's refusal to prosecute Northern Irish police officers implicated in illegal killings by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), the British-controlled police force.

Shortly thereafter, to add fuel to the fire over the RUC's alleged shoot-to-kill practices, a Northern nationalist was shot dead by a young British grenadier while reportedly walking away from a border security post. The British government called the killing a "regrettable accident" and refused to bring charges. But southern investigators, attempting to carry out an independent examination at the request of the dead man's family, discovered that a large portion of the corpse's rib-cage had been removed during the original post-mortem and not returned. According to a lawyer for the dead man's family, the missing part "would be the concluding evidence" relating to the case.

The March 6 assassination of three Irish

A 20-year anniversary nobody's celebrating

Republican Army (IRA) volunteers by British special service agents (SAS) working undercover in Gibraltar compounded the growing scandal over British security procedures. The facts of the killings directly contradicted initial British government statements that the three had been apprehended in the act of planting a massive car bomb which had to be defused after a gun battle: the men were shot unarmed and in the possession of no explosives. The British government awkwardly offered faltering "corrections" to their story and proceeded to produce a much smaller explosive device three days later.

But the burgeoning controversy, which threatened to force British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to answer some uncomfortable questions about British justice, was quickly overshadowed by two events: an indiscriminate attack by a pro-British Protestant at the funerals of the three IRA members killed in Gibraltar, and the gruesome killing of two British soldiers by a funeral cortege in nationalist West Belfast.

Almost immediately the slaughter of the three people in West Belfast's Milltown cemetery March 16 diverted media attention away from criticism of the official policy of the British SAS to horror at the bloodlust of local loyalists. But no sooner had the world seen a glimpse of anti-republican violence than the deaths of two British servicemen in Andersonstown refocused condemnation on the predominantly Catholic nationalist community once more.

Whereas the loyalist attack was officially dismissed as the random act of a mentally disturbed individual, the killing of two undercover British soldiers as they drove armed and at speed into an IRA funeral procession provoked quite different reactions in Britain. The "Iron Lady" herself greeted the bodies of the men as their coffins landed at a windswept airfield west of

London. "An act of appalling savagery," she called the soldiers' killing, adding, "there seems to be no depths to which these people will not sink."

But Sally MacErlean, whose 20-year-old son Thomas was one of the three killed in the Milltown cemetery, saw the sequence of events as less than coincidental: "The government had a lot of questions to answer that it didn't want to answer. Now it won't have to talk. And we're the savages again—though it's ours that keep dying."

Disturbing questions: One of the many disturbing aspects of the Milltown killings was the almost unprecedented absence of normal security forces at the funeral of the Gibraltar three. For the first time in 18 years, no RUC or British army forces were on hand to keep watch over an IRA funeral. This left mourners defenseless when a grenade-

Despite the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, sectarian hatred in Ulster is on the rise. 1988 has seen a series of bloody incidents.

throwing gunman attacked. Surprisingly, not one of the members of the IRA cortege was armed.

"If the crowd at the funeral had had guns and fired back, there would have been no outrage at what happened," said MacErlean.

Other key questions were raised by the statement made by the apprehended man and by his past record of loyalist paramilitary involvement. Appearing in court in Belfast on March 22, Michael Stone was charged with the murders of the three cemetery victims in addition to three other murders dat-

ing back to 1984. Describing himself in a statement read to the court as "a dedicated freelance loyalist," Stone claimed for each of the previous three killings that, "I had read his file. He was a legitimate target." The three earlier killings were each claimed at the time by the loyalist Ulster Defense Association (UDA) or one of its paramilitary sub-groups, the Ulster Freedom Fighters. This casts into

IRELAND

doubt the UDA's current denials that Stone was ever admitted to the organization.

In each of the three earlier murders, the UDA—citing undisclosed sources—asserted that its victims had been IRA members. A closer look showed that none belonged to the IRA, but that police records suggested republican activity. A police raid on a high-ranking UDA member last year uncovered confidential RUC and police documents from the southern republic. That leads many in the nationalist community to suspect that Stone may well have had access, through his paramilitary involvements, to information confirming that the funeral was to be unguarded.

"Where did the information come from to launch these [earlier] attacks?" asked Danny Morrison of Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, immediately after Stone's statement. "Were these RUC files to which Michael Stone referred?"

Hate escalates: Now questions remain about the deaths of British servicemen Derek Wood and David Howes, beaten by a furious crowd of mourners when their car reversed into the middle of a crowd at the funeral of IRA member Kevin Brady, one of the three people killed at Milltown. The two soldiers were finally left, stripped and shot, behind a wall a distance away. Pictures of their blood-spattered corpses suddenly eclipsed the images of the week before.

British officials say that the soldiers accidentally drove into the crowd. But "I can think of no conceivable reason for what the two soldiers were doing, armed and in the middle of a republican procession when there are at least eight other routes they could have taken to their destination," commented one local resident. "They must have known the crowd would go crazy, after what they'd been through. It's almost as if they were sent there to become martyrs."

Meanwhile, on the walls of loyalist streets, the graffiti reads, "Rambo Stone"—the "Super-Prod. [Protestant] of Milltown" and "Who says you can't get blood out of a Stone." So much for the British claim that Stone's assault on the IRA mourners was the isolated and unsupported action of a madman.

On Easter Sunday, grieving mother Sally MacErlean, her daughters and daughter-in-law took Thomas' two children to visit his grave in Milltown, not 200 yards from where he was hit with a grenade and shot. On leaving, Sally spotted the van driver who had ferried her dying son to the hospital. She spent a few moments thanking the man, after which he embraced her. "He's a Protestant," she declared on her return. "He drives reporters around. He was burned out last week for helping our Thomas." People from bus driver John Jordan's own neighborhood petrol-bombed his home.

"How's your son Thomas?" taunted British soldiers from their armored vehicles as MacErlean passed by.

Laura Flanders is a freelance reporter based in New York.

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

WHILE AMERICANS SORT OUT A NEW crop of presidential primary candidates, the French have been watching their own batch rather like they would watch a rerun of *Dallas*. French politics resembles a TV serial drama, with episode after episode featuring the same familiar characters in close-up.

The French equivalent of the primaries is the April 24 first-round vote. (Election results were not yet available as *In These Times* went to press.) Since incumbent Socialist President François Mitterrand had no serious competition on the left, the first round was above all a right-wing contest. The main suspense should have been the race between the two main conservative presidential candidates, Prime Minister Jacques Chirac and Raymond Barre. The original scenario from pundits had the self-styled "tortoise" Barre plodding to the finish line ahead of the jumpy "hare" Chirac, as in La Fontaine's fable. But nature can be stronger than literature, even in a French election campaign. The hare has out-run the tortoise all the way. The polls, showing Chirac steadily widening his lead, took away the suspense long before the first-round vote.

Differences on the right: Barre started out as the great favorite of the Anglo-American press. He is described as more "centrist" than Chirac, even though in terms of both economic policy and personal inclinations Barre seems rather more conservative than the prime minister.

Barre's economic policy is essentially a mild and fuzzy supply-side call for doing everything to create a "favorable environment" for business, notably by cutting business and upper-income taxes. Barre said there was "no question of increasing the deficit in the American manner," but promised to keep up arms spending and build the neutron bomb.

Barre has virtually no social program at all. While Chirac calls for a "social insertion minimum" for the unemployed, providing some sort of activity or training along with a minimum income, Barre rejects the idea of a guaranteed minimum income. Barre grudgingly accepted keeping the minimum wage and the existing social-security system since "the French are very attached to it." Chirac is more emphatic in support of the social-security system, and is also enthusiastic about popularizing capitalism by distributing stockholding among employees.

An economist and member of the Trilateral Commission brought into politics in 1976 to be Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's prime minister, Barre has no political party of his own and indeed announced his candidacy with the boast that he is "not a party man." This is one reason he has been so cherished by international finance and multinational corporations. Barre could push forward the integration of France into the European and world economies unencumbered by the array of special interests hanging to the coat-tails of a politician like Chirac.

What makes Chirac seem the more right-wing candidate is the grip his neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic party (RPR) may get on the centralized French state if ever Chirac is elected president. Fear of the "RPR State" is widespread. It is likely to move many Barre supporters to vote for Mitterrand against Chirac in round two.

With Barre losing steam, the international economic modernizers shifted their preferences to Mitterrand. Now that his commitment to socialism is fading into the mists of

The presidential race that's like a soap opera

time past, Mitterrand is ready and eager to play the historic role offered him to transcend traditional French differences between right and left, the better to lead the nation into the world economy.

The National Affront: Whether Mitterrand, Barre or Chirac, the next French president has promised to change very little, except what is necessary to gird France for international economic war and entrance into a real European common market at the

FRANCE

end of 1992. This triumph of technocracy may have helped National Front leader Jean Marie Le Pen dominate round one.

In the TV soap opera of French politics, Le Pen is "J.R.," the mean one in the cast of characters, the one the public loves to hate. Le Pen introduces human passion into a totally material economic world. His ex-wife Pierrette's revelation about Le Pen's personal finances, not to mention her own public strip-tease in the pages of *Playboy*, have greatly amused the public without doing candidate Le Pen the slightest political damage. The feuding Le Pen couple help make the whole Le Pen act less real, more fictional and more fun.

It is premature to consider Le Pen a dyed-blond French Hitler. It takes more than racism to pull off what Hitler did in 1933: it takes a winning economic program when nobody else has one. In the midst of a depression and mass unemployment, Hitler and his industrialist backers had the solution: deficit spending, which no other part at that time dared undertake. The public works and war preparations advocated by the Nazis brought Germany out of the depression.

Le Pen has no viable policy. His economic program stresses "national preference," giving French citizens priority over foreign immigrant residents when it comes to jobs, public housing and social benefits. Contrary to the figures that pop into Le Pen's head

when he is giving speeches, serious statistics indicate that this would not solve anything. There is no serious mass of immigrant privileges worth expropriating.

Le Pen is less a reincarnation of Hitler than a Gallic equivalent of the Moral Majority or Jesse Helms. In this most "American" of French election campaigns, Le Pen is avowedly the most American of candidates. He still admires Ronald Reagan. He proudly acknowledges imitating American television evangelical preachers, and is like them in his absolutely shameless mix of base vulgarity and soaring megalomania. His one-man shows combine low comedy with exalted evocations of Joan of Arc and Charlemagne holding off the Moslem hordes. "While we are alive, France will never be an Islamic Republic!" Le Pen bellowed at a stadium full of Marseilles fans, who cheered wildly.

The French love grousing, and somebody who can complain vigorously wins the same sort of admiration a sin-basher gets in Oklahoma. Le Pen is good at a favorite French form of complaining: France is going to pot, everything is going wrong, but it's somebody else's fault. Le Pen's act dramatizes France's decline, only to suggest that it could be reversed by simple, subjective measures within the reach of ordinary people—reas-

National Front candidate Jean Marie Le Pen has used fears about immigration to appeal to France's middle class. "While we are alive, France will never be an Islamic republic," he declares.



Conservative presidential candidates (clockwise from top): Jean Marie Le Pen, Prime Minister Jacques Chirac and Raymond Barre.

sertion of "French" spirit, an ethnic solidarity. It remains to be seen whether his fans really believe even this, or simply enjoy hearing him shoot off his mouth.

The power of Le Pen: Mitterrand is widely credited with having made the Machiavellian calculation that Chirac's efforts to win over Le Pen's voters between the two rounds will alienate modern conservatives, who will then vote for Mitterrand. The conservative parties are under close scrutiny from the Socialists for signs of deals with the National Front.

A paradox is that while cutting deals with the right-wing parties, Le Pen and his most ardent followers would prefer to see Mitterrand re-elected. "If Mitterrand wins," Le Pen told an Alsatian newspaper, "my competitors on the right will have been beaten, more so than I, inasmuch as they started out from established positions with considerable means at their disposal. I will become the moral leader of the nationalist opposition."

But Le Pen is a threat to the left as well as the right. At first, Le Pen's support was concentrated in the older-age brackets and liberal professions—that is, his extremist message drew voters away from the respectable right, from Chirac and Barre. But the composition of Le Pen's electorate has been changing rapidly, becoming younger and more working class. A young journalist, Anne Tristan, who infiltrated the National Front in Marseilles in order to write a book, maintains that extreme right racism is thriving in an atmosphere of economic and social insecurity in working-class housing projects where people feel more or less abandoned.

Part of Le Pen's message is geared to this lower-class audience. France is declining, he says, because young French couples don't have the housing space necessary to have a lot of children. "They'll never get a public housing apartment because there will always be a Senegalese family with seven, eight or nine children that gets there first," he told an audience in Rennes. "By voting for Le Pen, you'll vote for French cradles against charter plane-loads of immigrants!"

The issue of immigrants: Independent left candidate Pierre Juquin has centered his campaign on demanding the vote for immigrants—the only way, he argues, to prevent the National Front from gaining control of municipalities with large immigrant populations. The left parties had promised to give immigrants the vote in local elections—as in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Holland—but lost their nerve after getting into office in 1981. Recalling that Mitterrand's first government enacted the abolition of the death penalty despite opposition from public opinion, Juquin calls on Mitterrand to do the same for immigrants' voting rights.

In his long campaign "letter to the French people," Mitterrand concluded with characteristic ambiguity that, even if he knows most people are hostile to giving the vote to immigrants, he "personally deplores the fact that the state of our mores does not permit it."

Chirac, forgetting that 10 years ago he himself was in favor of letting immigrants vote, pretended to hear Mitterrand say he might do something about it and came up with a line to woo National Front voters: "Imagine if Khomeini had been elected to the town council at Neauphle-le-Chateau!" while in exile in France.

Le Pen has succeeded in making the false issue of immigrants a main issue of the campaign—when he is not the main issue himself.

'They're killing our ocean'

In our Sept. 30, 1987, issue, *In These Times* featured an exposé detailing "the fouling of the Atlantic" Ocean. Since then writer Dick Russell has been monitoring the situation, and reports below that pollution levels are even worse than previously known. Many experts fear that the Atlantic Coast's marine resources may be on the brink of ecological disaster.

By Dick Russell

NEARLY APRIL A COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN walked into a meeting of the New England Fishery Management Council with a sample of his recent catch. Every one of the dozen lobsters and half-a-dozen red crabs contained black holes burned into their shells from contamination. "They're killing our ocean," said George Whidden, who reported that offshore lobster catches are down between 70 percent and 90 percent this year. "From the continental shelf in, it's about to become a cesspool."

For almost a year now, barges laden with all of the sewage sludge from New York City, two adjacent counties and six more New Jersey counties have been making a daily trek to a region known as the 106 (mile) Deepwater Municipal Sludge Site—the last place in the U.S. where ocean dumping is allowed. They are dumping about 22,000 metric tons of wastes per day—eight million metric tons a year—including substantial amounts of industrial and household toxics that are pumped constantly into municipal sewage treatment facilities. Based on what offshore fishermen like Whidden are already seeing, the dumping is likely to have a devastating impact on the marine resources along the entire Eastern seaboard.

The new dump-site, designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), covers a 100-square-mile rectangular area about 106 miles due east of Cape May, N.J. It is "the worst possible place they could have chosen," said Leonard Belcaro, a New Jersey fisherman whose company, Offshore Resources, monitors the currents in the region.

Toxic materials in the sludge, including heavy metals and cancer-causing PCBs, are rapidly being dispersed along the continental shelf and offshore canyons, one of the major fishing grounds in the world. The convergence of warm-water currents spinning off the Gulf Stream sends whatever gets dumped in different directions, not unlike putting the wastes into a blender. Ocean flow charts indicate that the Labrador current will also take some of the poisons right down into the Chesapeake Bay. Belcaro's findings were substan-

tiated in a 1983 report by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which warned that the "potential area of influence" of toxic wastes deposited at the 106-mile site could extend for 46,000 square miles, all the way to Cape Hatteras off North Carolina.

Rampant shell disease in lobsters and crabs, and a possible massive species die-off in offshore waters, is only the first indicator of severe trouble ahead. Tilefish taken by fishermen off New Jersey are being brought up with fin rot and lesions. The billion-dollar-a-year Northeast and Mid-Atlantic fishing industries, which account for \$560 million of fish products and supports 29 million recreational fishing trips annually, could soon be in economic jeopardy from the dumping. In addition, the area is the spawning and nursery grounds for some 200 species of fish themselves, as well as a haven for numerous marine mammals in the dolphin family and several whale and turtle varieties already

on the endangered species list.

Three congressional bills were introduced earlier this year to halt the sludge dumping, which is already supposed to be illegal under both international law and several U.S. statutes, due to the excessive contaminants contained in the sludge. But New York City Mayor Ed Koch and almost the entire New York congressional delegation are fighting the proposed legislation, maintaining that the city has no other alternative. By contrast, New Jersey—which faced an onslaught of coastal pollution horrors last summer—is pushing to end the ocean disposal, with Sen. Frank Lautenberg and Reps. William Hughes and Jim Saxton co-authoring bills to phase out the practice by 1991.

Out of sight, out of mind: The EPA, meanwhile, is so far simply riding the waves of potential habitat destruction. Although the agency has never prepared an environmental impact statement for the sludge transportation and dumping, as required by federal law, it decided to sanction a deep-water site in 1985 because a long-

utilized 12-mile dump outside New York harbor had become virtually a dead sea.

In fact, in November 1977 Congress had directed the EPA to end all sewage sludge ocean dumping by the end of 1981. "The amendment reflected congressional dissatisfaction with the slow progress made by EPA in curbing harmful dumping," according to a later article in the *Ecology Law Quarterly*. But as the deadline approached, municipalities in New York and New Jersey filed successful lawsuits in federal court challenging the EPA's authority in the sludge matter. Then-EPA administrator Anne Gorsuch Burford decided not to appeal the decision.

That's where things have stood ever since, except for when the EPA forced New York and New Jersey to cease all dumping at the old 12-mile site and move to the deep-water area. The new site is only a short distance from an industrial dumping ground once used by about 100 companies.

Some alternative ways to deal with the sludge

It is a mind-boggling national dilemma: where should the end product of the typical sewage treatment plant, the sludge, go? If it isn't dumped into the ocean, should it be incinerated and spew the toxics into the air? Ought it to go into already-overflowing landfills where it might leak into drinking water supplies?

Clearly, neither of those possibilities is an enviable solution. But alternatives do exist, albeit costlier ones that a huge urban area like New York would rather ignore. The question is whether citizen pressure can force the politicians to reallocate the funds to come up with better solutions.

There is nothing inherently wrong with sludge—it is organic and loaded with nutrients. Problems arise because industries are not mandated to practice reduction of toxics or to pre-treat and regulate the poisons that they current-

ly are allowed to pour into municipal sewage treatment plants and because people dump toxins like paint thinner down their household drains.

If these practices were stopped, organic sludge could be used for fertilizer or compost. After sludge is treated, it can be processed further in underground tanks called digesters. Here bacteria decompose human wastes and the ground food from garbage disposals, and even reduce waste concentrations from industries. The resultant nutrient-filled slurry can then be used as a fertilizer for agriculture, forests or land reclamation. In each case, sludge spread on the land improves its nutrient uptake, increases water retention, permits easier root penetration and reduces soil runoff.

Though it can't be applied on all types of soil, particularly in low water tables, about 25 percent of the nation's sludge

is already land applied today. Milwaukee has been converting sludge to organic fertilizer for 62 years, 60,000 tons annually. It is chemically treated, baked dry, run through filters and tested to ensure that toxins have been removed, and finally bagged and shipped across the country for use on lawns and shrubs. While the fertilizer production is not a profit-making venture, Milwaukee's sewer authority director Patrick Marchese says, "We have absolutely no difficulty selling it."

Seattle, which still faces severe pollution problems in Puget Sound from years of neglect, now ships its sludge to nearby forests where it is sprayed on trees, making them grow twice as fast. Chicago as well as Portland and Salem, Ore., also fertilize farms and plant nurseries with sludge.

And sewage sludge can be transformed into compost, a soil conditioner,

F/V Barbara ANN
Capt. Robt. Campanale
MARCH 1988



F/V Barbara Ann
Capt. Robt. Campanale
14347.3 178 Fathoms
43282.7 4-2-88



Capt.
14347.3
43282.7



These crabs and lobsters from the Atlantic Ocean had multiple chemical burns.

F/V TOMMY MUNROE
Capt. G. Whidden
MARCH 1988



F/V Debbie ANN
Capt. Eric WITT
MARCH 1988



Photos by George Whidden

regulations by a certain date. When they finally do address, for example, how many parts per million of cadmium can be present in sludge, we plan to challenge them if appropriate. Industries aren't supposed to be sending certain kinds of wastes to sewage treatment plants, but rather pre-treating the toxics themselves. This is a major provision of the Clean Water Act, but it has lagged years behind programs that control direct industrial discharges. Recent EPA audits found rampant violations of program requirements at sewage plants, some of which haven't gotten around to even identifying who all their industrial users are. So how can they begin to really control them? Compliance by industries with pre-treatment requirements is very, very lax."

An estimated 20,000 industries in New York and New Jersey pour material into sewage treatment plants "that is so toxic it fails the criteria to implement any land-based alternative," says Cindy Zipf, executive director of New Jersey's Clean Ocean

Action coalition. These poisons include arsenic, cadmium, mercury, lead PCBs and DDT. "So it's too toxic for land but not to dump in the ocean, where it's almost impossible to monitor and where you find the very foundation of the food chain," adds Zipf. "It's got to be stopped."

Breaking the chain: Indeed, the basis of aquatic food chains are microscopic plants called phytoplankton. As noted by staff attorney Sally Lentz of the Oceanic Society in testimony before Congress, "No record is kept of cumulative loads of contaminants at the dump site, in this case, heavy metals. The sensitivity of open ocean phytoplankton to metals is well documented, and the significance of the productivity of plankton to the global carbon cycle is only now being recognized."

NOAA studies have already detected significant damage to the marine ecosystem caused by the earlier industrial dumping at the 106-mile site. Codepods, a planktonic crustacean that is an important link in the food chain, have decreased substantially in the region. There has been a sizeable increase in moribund fish eggs, with the frequency of damage

hitting about 20 percent in the waste plumes. Numerous important fisheries, including cod, haddock, menhaden, bluefish, mackerels and anchovies, are likely to be impacted. Big game species, such as swordfish and marlin, tend to follow the edges of the Gulf Stream's warm core rings, where studies indicate nearly 25 percent of the wastes are dumped and then dispersed over a wide range of ocean.

Continued on page 22

Today, only the DuPont Company is still intent on pouring acid wastes into the open sea, having twice received permit extensions from EPA and currently seeking to renew the operation again for another three years.

The EPA has been lax on yet another front. The 1977 Clean Water Act gave the agency one year to issue regulations setting permissible levels for a long list of toxic contaminants regularly found in sewage sludge. Eleven years later, EPA has yet to come up with even draft regulations and has repeatedly ignored congressional deadlines. In March the Washington-based Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) filed suit in federal court in an attempt to force EPA action.

"If we win or settle," says the NRDC's Jessica Landman, "what we will get from the agency is an agreement to propose

by mixing it with an organic bulking agent like woodchips, sawdust, leaves or straw. Many foreign countries utilize reactor systems for processing the organic matter in silo-like structures, which protect the material from the elements and also contain odors. But because of the high cost involved—and the household and industrial toxics—only a few full-scale sludge reactors have been attempted in the U.S.

Or consider the solution of Muskegon, Mich., whose once-popular lake resort area was severely polluted 10 years ago. Instead of constructing a conventional waste-treatment facility, Muskegon came up with an innovative plan to use recycled wastewater to irrigate farmland. About 10 billion gallons of wastewater are now used to fertilize some 450,000 bushels of corn, with income from corn sales defraying part of the cost of the treatment operation.

Yet another remarkable process is currently being tested—converting sewage sludge into oil. Backed with research

money from the EPA and a Japanese company, the Battelle Memorial Institute eight years ago set out to pioneer a "sludge to oil reactor system" (Stors) in Richland, Wash. Efforts to come up with a fuel initially foundered on a smelly goo. Then a small Florida-based firm involved in alternative fuels, the American Fuel and Power Corporation, treated a Battelle sample of the sludge oil with a variant of a secret oil additive it had already invented to reduce friction. Entrepreneur Harry Avrigian found that he could convert the Battelle process into a non-odorous fuel with the consistency of No. 4 diesel fuel.

Last year Battelle and American Fuel signed an agreement to construct and operate a new sludge pilot plant, Stors II, in Richland. American Fuel will have exclusive rights to the sludge conversion technology.

Meanwhile, agricultural engineers at New York's Cornell University have devised a new means of treating sewage that they say can produce reservoir-

quality water at little or no cost. By using an unusual bacterial technique, heavy pollutants are filtered out and then plants are grown on partially cleansed waste water. No sludge is produced at all in Cornell's hydroponic system, where plants spring up in a nutrient-rich solution rather than soil. While it cleans the water, the Cornell system produces such commercial products as natural gas from methane, nursery plants and trees. And according to the project's chief researcher, Dr. William Jewell, the experiment may well show that communities could eventually turn a profit from sewage treatment.

The project, according to EPA scientist Jim Basilico, has "the potential for a low-cost, low-energy process" that could benefit many cities. "If it can be done in a northern climate like New York State," says Basilico, "it could be done anywhere." So, given the incentive, the sewage sludge dilemma hardly seems unsolvable—if the political will can be mustered.

-D.R.

EDITORIAL

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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In These Times believes that to guarantee our life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, Americans must take greater control over our nation's basic economic and foreign policy decisions. We believe in a socialism that fulfills rather than subverts the promise of American democracy, where social needs and rationality, not corporate profit and greed, are the operative principles. Our pages are open to a wide range of views, socialist and non-socialist, liberal and conservative. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

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The Jackson candidacy is no ordinary challenge

Last week's presidential primary election in New York confirmed two things that have become increasingly obvious since February's Iowa caucuses: first, that Jesse Jackson is fashioning a committed left coalition that constitutes the largest coherent bloc of voters within the Democratic Party; and second, that the Jackson coalition does not have sufficient support, even among caucus and primary voters, to win the presidential nomination in July. In New York, as everywhere else, Jackson ran a lot better this year than he did in 1984. Then, he ran third and received 26 percent of the vote. Last week he ran second with 37 percent. Most of the new support came from whites (especially the young), those with low incomes, trade unionists and Hispanics (see story on page 3).

There can be no doubt that much of Jackson's support is personal. His campaign has been brilliant and tireless. But his ideas and programs have been equally important. Unlike his opponents—all but one now retired—Jackson has built a constituency around a set of principles consistently articulated and clearly at odds with those of the present administration. While the core of his support is racial, his views on foreign policy, military spending, social welfare and drugs have won increasing numbers of whites and Hispanics to his side. These views have been decisive in creating a strongly, even passionately committed following.

Unlike Jackson, Dukakis as well as Gore and those long gone have had much less solid support. Last week about half of those questioned in the *New York Times*/CBS News exit poll said they backed Dukakis with reservations; only 45 percent said they supported him strongly. This, of course, is partly the result of Dukakis' strategy. Don't say anything too clearly. Don't offend any group of potential supporters by taking principled stands on major issues, especially now, when Jackson has such a well-defined turf, and when his fol-

lowers will be so sorely needed in November. But it is also the result of a politics of personality in which the less said about our nation's major problems the better. Dukakis campaigned as the most competent candidate, the best manager, the most experienced executive. And those who voted for him did so pragmatically, but with little conviction.

Reverse passion: Personal virtues aside, Jackson's success constitutes a popular rejection both of Ronald Reagan's record and the political principles of the Reagan years. The Jackson movement, seen that way, is the first genuine manifestation of a desire on the part of the American people to confront the new reality that Reaganism has struggled manfully to deny and reverse. Reagan came into office passionately determined to bring back the glory days of American supremacy, at home and abroad. His belief in the ultimate efficacy of the market and in the beneficence of American imperial domination in the Third World have characterized not only his administration but public discourse in the media and virtually all other elite institutions the past eight years. But the result—at home and abroad—has been to accelerate our decline, both as a respected world power and as a healthy and prosperous nation concerned with the welfare of all its citizens.

Sometimes directly, sometimes obliquely, Jackson has consistently confronted this reality, and he has been the only one to do so. In the process he has helped create a movement that could transform the Democratic Party and move our nation into the 21st century as once again a progressive force in the world.

But the movement around Jackson can easily be frustrated. The danger is not so much that Jackson will now be denied a place on the ticket. In fact, his getting the vice-presidential nomination might well have negative consequences, both by reducing Democratic prospects in November and by putting Jackson in a position of having to follow Dukakis' lead. The real danger is that Dukakis and other Democratic Party leaders do not understand the significance of the Jackson phenomenon—or that they understand it and reject it. That failure could lead to a Republican victory, and many more years of post-Reagan Reaganism.

LETTERS

One-sided

YOUR ARTICLE ABOUT THE LABOR DISPUTE AT Consumers Union (*ITT*, April 6) was thoroughly one-sided and omitted virtually all of the information I gave your reporter (who, not incidentally, failed to reveal to me that he is a former official of the Newspaper Guild). Excluded from the article were such facts as:

- The contract with CU is one of the very best of all Guild contracts in the entire country, and its top minimums the highest or among the highest. As of Dec. 31, 1986, the top minimum salary in the contract was \$978.92 per week. Beginning mail delivery clerks receive \$16,000 per year and \$21,700 after three years. Secretaries receive \$25,234 after three years while administrative secretaries receive \$29,755 after four years. (And these do not include raises to be negotiated for 1987 and 1988.)

- There are 12 paid holidays and three paid personal days, in addition to vacations.

- Medical, drug, dental and optical benefits are excellent.

- Sick pay provisions are extremely generous and are based on a sliding scale that provides, after nine and a half years of service, 100 working days at full pay and 100 working days at half pay (renewable each year).

- The number of union jobs at CU has grown from 132 in December 1983 to the current 185.

- At the very same time that the Guild refused to discuss merit pay with CU, it signed (with *Time* and *Newsweek*) contracts that include merit.

- The Guild is demanding a 7.9 percent wage increase for each year of a three-year contract, and has more than 50 demands still on the table.

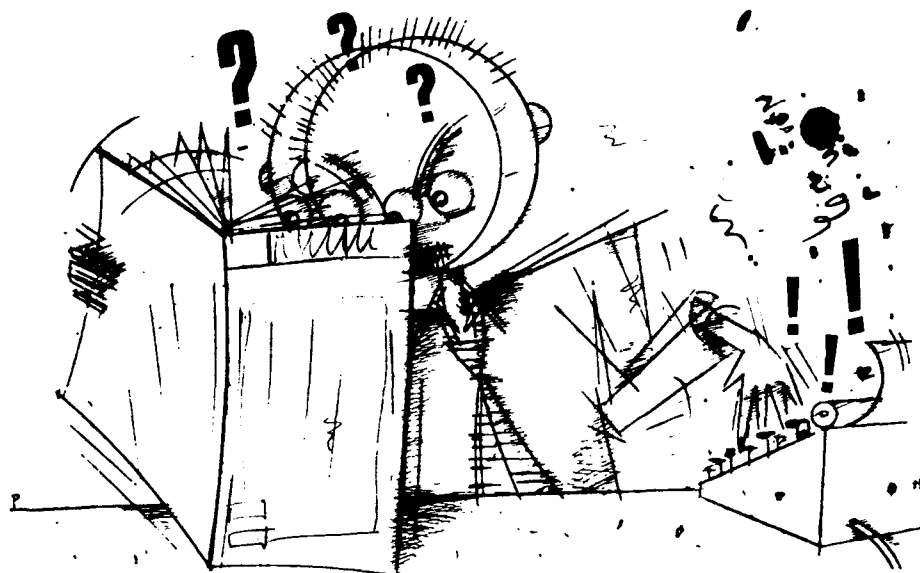
- In early December 1987, management suggested that the stalemate be resolved by "final offer binding arbitration." Today, more than four months later, the Guild has neither agreed or disagreed, nor offered an alternative solution.

David C. Berliner
Assistant Director, Consumers Union
Mt. Vernon, N.Y.

Courageous

THE WRITER OF "CONSUMER REPORTS' NICE LIBERALS just happen to be union-busters" (*ITT*, April 6) did a terrific job of exposing the hypocrisy of a management team and board of directors who hide behind the facade of "liberal, do-gooder" rhetoric for the world at large as they shortchange loyal employees on the homefront. The rampant revisionism taking place at *Consumer Reports* would make our labor-oriented founders turn over in their graves. Here are a few more examples of *Consumer Reports*' departure from its labor-inspired background:

- In 1982, the board of directors changed the company's non-profit charter for the ostensible purpose of revising the tax status. But the charter change did much more—it eliminated all references to *Consumer Reports*' labor union origin and philosophy in 1936 when the company was born. The board of directors made these changes quietly; they neglected to consult with or notify the membership of the organization about them.



- In 1986, a series of articles in *Consumer Reports* about the "history" of the organization failed to even mention that since 1951 the Newspaper Guild has represented the majority of the staff—including writers, product testers, maintenance workers, clerical staff members, market analysts and statisticians. Some oversight!

- Nowhere on the pages of *Consumer Reports* will readers find any mention of the labor difficulties encountered daily by a dedicated staff, perpetrated by a management team headed by Rhoda Karparkin, who bills herself as a "liberal" for public-relations purposes. Similarly, a 91-day strike in the winter of 1984 was never mentioned in *Consumer Reports*.

Twice during Rhoda Karparkin's tenure employees tried to make things more equitable by attempting to gain staff representation on the board of directors. A top management official at one point in these efforts told staffers that board members "wear a mantle of specialness"—implying that not one of us responsible for the magazine's content was qualified to serve. Unfortunately, the board rejected both proposals.

Your article was read by many angry employees of *Consumer Reports* who have been for too long underdogs of the double standard enforced here. Thank you for your courage in bringing our story to the fore.

Mary Tobias
Project leader, *Consumer Reports*
Member, Local 3, Newspaper Guild of New York

At worst, arrogance

IN HIS LETTER TO THE EDITOR (*ITT*, APRIL 6) LOOMIS Mayfield takes Alexander Cockburn to task over his recent article on the role of certain peace groups in the passage of "humanitarian" aid to the contras. Mayfield, who identifies himself as formerly of na-

tional staff of Countdown '87: Campaign to End Contra Aid, feels Cockburn owes him an apology. It's Mayfield and national staff of the other groups who owe us an apology. We're the people out here who also work hard and long and who contribute our dollars to those groups on the strength of their pledge to end contra aid. To suggest that Cockburn displays a "willful ignorance of American political realities" and then proceed to rationalize the "agonizing choice" of urging a yes vote is arrogance at its worst. The political reality is that any contra aid constitutes a signal for the contras to continue to carry out our administration's plans to oust the Sandinista government and subvert the peace process. A united opposition of the peace groups we trusted would have sent a clear message.

Pearl Hirshfield
Evanston, Ill.

In defense of VA

I THINK THAT YOUR ARTICLE, AND ESPECIALLY THE headline, "VA police brutality epitomizes Reagan era" (*ITT*, April 6) does a disservice to the Veterans Administration (VA) and the people it serves. The story is of a single policeman, his alleged brutality and possible protection and/or cover-up by high VA and administration officials (probably political appointees and not long-time VA employees). The alleged acts are indeed heinous.

Yet, while nowhere is the case made that this is a other than one evil man, the headline implies pervasive police brutality throughout the VA. To the contrary, the article documents that many of the allegations made against Wilson come from VA police officers and rather than being a part of this brutality, they have tried to stop it (and suffered the consequences, again probably not from the

VA "system," but from current political appointees).

As a political entity the VA frequently gets drawn into controversial situations and sometimes pushed into making unfortunate decisions. That these should eclipse the miracle that the VA health care system is, is sad. I use the word miracle intentionally, for consider what the VA does. It is a huge, nationwide system that provides care to persons not based on who they are, how much money they make, or if they can afford to pay, but just because they are veterans. That many are poor or indigent does not matter; there is no fee for service or profit incentive at work. Since all physicians are paid on the same scale, high rollers are not catered to. Exotic procedures, tests or equipment are not used just because they are profitable (because there is no profit), but only as medically indicated. Again, the patients served are not primarily generals, but ordinary draftees and enlistees, the common man.

While the VA has many problems, having been a student, resident or staff physician at three VAs, three university medical centers and in private practice, I believe on average the care provided by the VA is comparable to any in the country. I believe that it is generally better and given with less prejudice than most county or "charity" hospitals that serve a similar population. That this form of socialized medicine, catering to a dispossessed population, can exist in the U.S. is indeed a miracle.

Terry Kinzel
Houghton, Mich.

A peeling

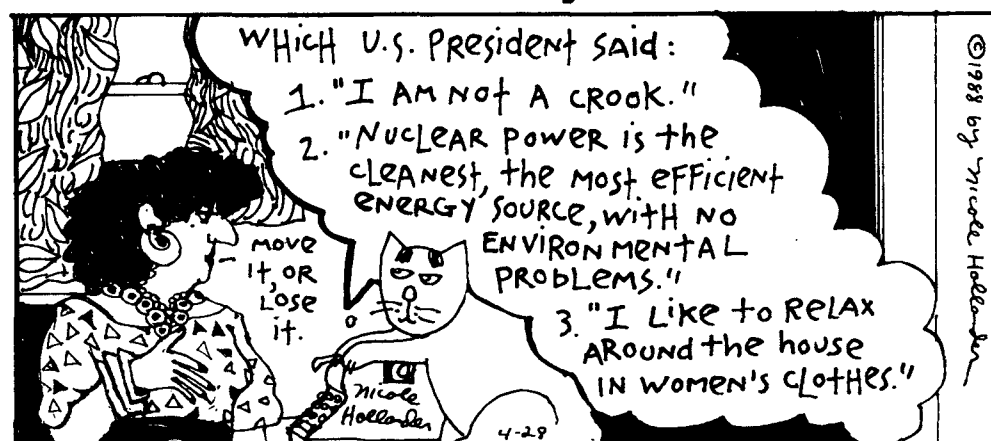
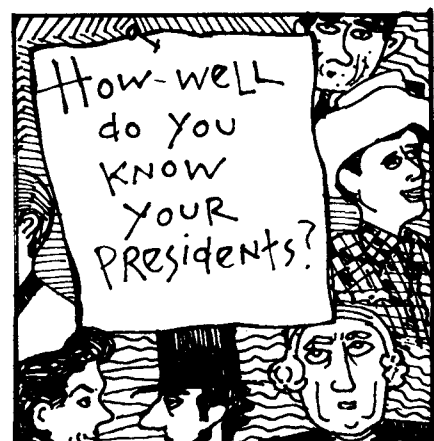
WHEN I FIRST CAME ACROSS THE ARTICLE ON Toni Morrison (*ITT*, Feb. 24), I was going to skip it since I haven't read more than a few pages of any of her works. Then I noticed that Salim Muwakkil was the writer and I decided to take a chance.

What a well-written article! Muwakkil peeled away layer after layer of the issues involved, in a crisp, informative way. After reading this piece I realized that I have come to expect insightful and balanced writing from him. Whether I care about the topic he's chosen or not, I know he'll find a way to relate it to issues that I do care about.

Bill Nowak
Buffalo, N.Y.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space your letter—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander

By Frederick C. Stern

I RETURNED RECENTLY FROM A FOUR-month stay as a Fulbright lecturer in East Germany. As far as I know, I was the first-ever professor of American literature at Wilhelm Pieck University in Rostock, a seaport on the Baltic in the north of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). A new Fulbright agreement had been completed with the GDR just shortly before my selection, an indication of easing tensions between the U.S. and the GDR, and of the growing recognition in the West that the division of the old Germany into two states is a *fait accompli*.

It was fascinating to be in the GDR while *glasnost* and *perestroika* were being intensely debated by students, faculty members and others I met. Most of these people were skeptical, but deeply hopeful that the problems of the GDR's socialist society might soon be ameliorated. Many expressed the view that *perestroika*—understood as making industrial and agricultural enterprises more efficient, responsible and self-determining—had occurred in the GDR long before Mikhail Gorbachov and the Soviet Communist Party leadership adopted the concept. I cannot judge whether that is true, but the GDR is—economically—one of the most successful of the Warsaw Pact countries.

I did not have opportunity to visit outside of the GDR, but Rostock is a good place to examine contrasts between it and other East European countries. Visitors from all over Eastern Europe, Vietnam, Cuba, the Soviet Union and many Third World countries are to be met there. One soon discovers that these visitors come at least in part to *buy*. Soviet citizens and Bulgarians, Romanians and Cubans all told me that the GDR is far more richly supplied with consumer goods than their own countries. Only Hungarians and Czechs feel that their countries have as much.

I don't want to suggest that the GDR is a consumer's paradise—vegetables (except cabbage) and fruit seem always in short supply. Many items, like paper goods, are at a premium. Lines for everything are long and cumbersome. And the contrast with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) is startling. When one crosses into East Germany the telephone system is in shambles, a source of endless grumbling, and efficiency seemed to me at levels far below those in the U.S. Nevertheless, there is

Can glasnost beat the odds in East Germany?

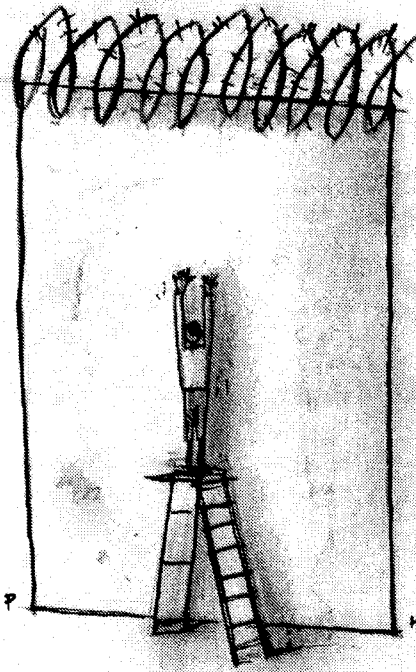
enough food to go around, good—though cumbersome—medical care and a vast cultural array of theater, music and film available to everyone. Though housing is desperately short, and often extremely ugly—especially the "Stalin architecture" of the '50s and early '60s—and one must wait 13 years to buy a little car called a Trabant, or 15 years for a somewhat larger one called a Wartburg, living conditions are better than merely tolerable.

Certainly it is so perceived by visitors from other socialist and Third World countries. That there seem to be serious inefficiencies, and that the state apparatus continues to have deleterious effects on much of the productive life of the nation is another matter.

What's missing? It is *glasnost*—understood as openness in information, travel, exchange between citizens and government and citizens and party—that the people of the GDR lack and feel such hope for in the Gorbachov initiatives.

I attended a meeting at the local Heinrich Mann Klub, a center for cultural affairs, lectures and art work at which the Soviet Union's consul in Rostock spoke about *perestroika* and *glasnost*. He raised serious questions about its applications to the GDR in a fascinating speech—in excellent German—witty and sharp. But more intriguing was the audience response. The room was packed by people mostly in their 30s and early 40s. When the consul finished, speaker after speaker rose, sometimes citing Lenin or Marx with great fervor, to complain about travel restrictions not only to the West but within the Eastern bloc.

They also talked about dishonesty on the part of the Communist Party leadership, about failure to acknowledge failure, the impossibility of rectifying error when all commands came from the center, and about the impossibility of bringing about change when election of public officials or of works management are controlled by one party and one center that alone is able to nominate candidates. With passion and anger, these people asked for change—and at the same time expressed doubt that real change



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would come.

The consul tried to get people to discuss a question he had raised about whether the policies being developed by Gorbachov were applicable to the GDR, but the audience seemed to take for granted that there were applications and ignored the question. When a man who identified himself as a Communist Party functionary (his term) rose to defend the party and the society, he, too, was ignored. Most in the audience regarded him as ludicrous.

This discussion was carried on within the framework of an underlying premise—that the GDR is, and ought to continue to be, a socialist society. No one advocated a return to capitalism, and this premise appeared to be sincerely held by all speakers, not simply asserted out of fear. Complaints were many, heartfelt, openly voiced, in ways that are themselves indicative of a new spirit the suggestion of *glasnost* is bringing about.

Cultural workers with whom I spoke—ardent Marxists, in many cases party members—who have long fought a rear-guard action to make possible the expression of unsanctioned ideas in the arts—expressed similar feelings. Many times, after I had achieved a modicum of trust, discussion

turned to novels not available, poems not known or suppressed, plays never produced. There were some expressions of despair about the state of the arts in the GDR, especially about the state of knowledge of art from the West, and about the tendency of artists from the GDR to flee to the West. But many times hope sprang lively in these conversations. "Now," several such cultural workers told me, "with Gorbachov behind me, I can really begin to work to open things up." Though distressed at the hope such speakers placed in one man, I was much moved by their profound desire to bring about a richer, more diversified cultural life. They reminded me of my circles in the U.S., as we discuss what we think is wrong with our own society and discuss what we can do to change it—though we have less to fear than do those I heard in the GDR.

And finally the students: In his comment about where we are now in the disarmament movement, E.P. Thompson said (*The Nation*, Dec. 12, 1987), in effect, that the Cold War is over, that young people see themselves as living in an entirely different era. He is right, not only for Western students, but for those of the GDR. The young men and women in my seminars, between 22 and 25 years of age, the third generation since World War II, are concerned about peace, but they do not really believe in the coming of war. Forced to spend part of their summers in Civilian Defense work, most of them think it ridiculously wasteful of their time and energy and despise it. Indoctrinated by years of clumsy and hopelessly old-fashioned teachings of Marxism-Leninism ("ML" is the most disliked subject for most of my students), the brightest of them are aware that their capacity to think independently or creatively has been seriously damaged.

These young people hope desperately for a more creative, more open, more *glasnost*-oriented educational system, and they especially long for freer travel to the West. It is not that they want to abandon socialism, or emigrate to the West. Rather they feel that the regime's restrictions on thought and knowledge have prevented them from developing their minds, expanding their horizons—from knowing what the rest of the world knows. Living in a country of 16 million inhabitants, they desperately need contact with the rest of the world. Their hope, too, lies in Gorbachov's success and in the transmission of his policies to the GDR.

Not that the present regime is so terribly unpopular. Indeed, Erich Honecker is rather well-liked, especially because of his acceptance recently in the FRG and elsewhere in the West, which makes the people I met feel that the GDR is finally being accepted as a nation among nations. The Communist Party is considered, especially by the most ardent Marxists, a force of historical importance and of great potential, but over and over again I heard the complaint that the party has become hidebound, uninteresting, lacking in creativity, only a vehicle of careerists.

It is also important to say that no one I met is sure *glasnost* will come. The best odds I got were 50-50, though more often I was given 70-30 against. Even the Soviet consul made it clear that the battle is far from won.

Frederick C. Stern is a professor of English at the University of Illinois, Chicago.



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Authentic Political Pusillanimity and Pervasive Political Repression Quiz

- (1) How explicitly must wrongdoing be exposed for the radical or liberal or religious communities to even dare seriously attempting (even if discreetly) to actually do anything effective about it?
- (2) Have progressives ever meaningfully attempted to criticize incitement to discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, political perspective, etc., in violation of article VII of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially where such incitement has not been wholly explicit?
- (3) Given how tenderly inciting speech is protected by *due process of law*, even from significant protest, why is there an "advocacy" problem should someone try to use portions of the proceeds of a 'live aid' type event as seed money for an organization fighting world hunger policy comparable in scope to, say, Greenpeace?
- (4) Socialism aside, why hasn't there even been a serious effort since the '60s (except, briefly, in 1982) to organize a comprehensive peace movement in the United States?
- (5) Why are American radicals more assiduous in enforcing standards of bourgeois etiquette even when they themselves claim to personally transcend them, than they are about political substance?

If you have the answers to any of these questions, please send them to:

Jeffrey Alan Homan ("Cloudy")
The Remote Secretary Box #43
2124 Kittredge
Berkeley, CA 94704

(415) 845-2206, ext. 66

Gore: Man or Midgetman?

One of the more preposterous sounds of the 1988 presidential campaign has been Al Gore touting his experience in government and lecturing Messrs. Jackson and Dukakis for naivete in world affairs. In New York, Gore even took time out from his revolting antics in search of the Jewish vote to berate Dukakis for "irresponsibility" in expressing some impeccably conventional interpretation of NATO policy.

Gore's only known achievement in international affairs lies in the realm of arms control, and if he has any sense he'll keep quiet about it, for it concerns the Midgetman missile and reveals Gore in a sorry light.

When he was a humble congressman back in the early '80s, Gore had an adviser called Leon Feurth who spent his days dreaming of ways in which the world could be rid of all MIRVed weapons (i.e., those with multiple warheads; ever since Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara sanctioned the development of MIRVs, to get around a numerical limit on missiles, the task of arms controllers has been made infinitely more difficult). Feurth also pondered ways to get rid of "counterforce" nuclear weapons, in favor of old-fashioned city-smashers. Counterforce weapons supposedly single out the enemy's missile silos for destruction and thus render more likely a pre-emptive first strike. (It goes without saying that all of this nuclear theology is nonsense, since nuclear missiles are inherently inaccurate. Reality has never been a major factor in these realms.)

Gore took up Feurth's dream and began to push for a single warhead missile that would be mobile and not sufficiently accurate to be deemed a "counterforce" missile. This was the Midgetman in embryo. Then in 1983 President Reagan appointed a commission to figure out what to do about the Counterforce missile, the MX, and these men—Scowcroft, Aspin and Woolsey—decided that the best thing to do would be to put the MX in silos. To further their schemes they needed to get Gore and his allies in Congress on board, which they did by the simple expedient of promising to build Midgetman. Gore excitedly agreed.

As a result of this deal MX stayed alive. Furthermore, the U.S. Air Force took a look at Midgetman and decided to give it a bigger warhead and (theoretically) greater accuracy, thus making it into the reverse of its intended purpose: namely, a counterforce missile.

A year ago Fred Kaplan, defense correspondent for the *Boston Globe*, interviewed Gore and asked him how he would define deterrence. "Survivable counterforce weapons," chanted Gore, to which Kaplan asked why Midgetman was necessary, given that the submarine-launched Trident II was theoretically more survivable and theoretically more accurate. Gore replied that Midgetman could take out "leadership targets," that is, hardened bunkers sheltering the politburo and kindred high brass around Moscow.

In sum, Gore's achievement in his preferred area is to have dreamed up a new weapon. After being suckered by the MX commission and the Air Force into having allowed this weapon to be converted into

the precise opposite of its original function, Gore now has the mortification of having brought 500 Midgetmans and 500 extra nuclear warheads into the world, all with the idea of eliminating Gorbachov and his companions in the event of a nuclear conflict.

Kinzer: the New Abrams?

We're at the point in the political season when people start dreaming of a career in Washington and pondering which set of putatively presidential coattails they should grab hold of. Among those now nourishing plans is Stephen Kinzer, Nicaragua correspondent of the *New York Times*, object of well-merited detestation by the Central American peace movement. In an earlier incarnation Kinzer once worked for Michael Dukakis. He now harbors the hope of being the assistant secretary of state for Central America—the job now held by Elliott Abrams. He made his pitch to Dukakis aides touring the region.

Both Kinzer and James LeMoyné will be leaving Central America this year. The *Times*' new man in El Salvador will be Lindsay Gruson. This bodes ill for decent coverage in the *Times* from a country that will be much in the news, as the State Department tries to persuade the world that the ARENA party, headed by Roberto d'Aubuisson, which did well in the recent elections, is now "pragmatic," "modernized" and not the gang of thugs and butchers of the past.

On past form Gruson will be adept at promulgating such fantasies. On one brief tour in El Salvador he has already covered himself with shame. He then was led around by the nose in Nicaragua by contra salesmen, who managed to convince Gruson that a vast network of underground hospitals and kindred support systems sustained them in the field. Gruson duly reported these fantasies in the *Times*, to the great indignation of those familiar with the terrain and well aware that everything he had written was false. Gruson does not know Spanish and is studying hard to master the rudiments of the language.

The Truth about Cuba's prisons

One dream of the Reagan administration is to get Cuba designated as a human-rights abuser on a par with Paraguay. Venue for the latest bid in this direction was a U.N. conference in Geneva in March, but the U.S. delegation, led by Armando Valladares, who spent 22 years in a Cuban prison (having been convicted of being part of a plot to plant bombs around Havana shortly after Castro and his forces evicted Batista), failed in its effort to have Cuba censured. While these maneuvers were taking place in Geneva, members of an Institute for Policy Studies-sponsored delegation were calling a press conference to discuss the findings of their investigation into Cuban prisons,

which took place between February 26 and March 5. IPS had reached an agreement with the National Union of Cuban Jurists (NUCJ) to establish the Joint Commission on the Treatment and Conviction of Prisoners in the U.S. and Cuba. Under the terms of the agreement an IPS-organized delegation would conduct an investigation of six Cuban prisons and interview up to 100 prisoners, both political and common. An NUCJ-led delegation would then conduct a similar investigation in the U.S. following the IPS trip.

The access to Cuban prisoners gained by the IPS delegation was unprecedented; delegates had full and complete access to inspect all facilities in each prison, and conducted interviews with more than 120 prisoners, 50 of whom were political prisoners. Members of the delegation included Aryeh Neir and Adrian DeWind of Americas Watch, Herman Schwartz, professor of law at American University, and Julia Sweig of IPS.

Their findings included some surprises, most notably that political prisoners are held under generally satisfactory conditions and are not singled out for punishment. Those prisoners who are confined in the appalling conditions of the punishment cells—bare, tiny, dark, with prisoners sometimes unclothed—are almost exclusively common criminals who commit infractions of prison discipline, or fight with other prisoners or with guards.

IPS also reported on a number of constructive aspects of the Cuban prison system. These include the fact that most prisoners work a regular work week at constructive jobs; almost all prisoners are paid the same wage as civilians (before discounts for standard of living); regular prison facilities are clean and hygienic; conjugal visits are well established; prisoners are provided with education to bring them up to the ninth-grade level; and, contrary to the charges made by the U.S. in Geneva, torture and extrajudicial executions do not take place.

Unfortunately, the media, which was on hand for the close of the U.N. conference on March 11 in Switzerland, gleefully reporting on the Reagan administration's "victory," were almost completely unrepresented that same day in Washington, where IPS held a press conference to discuss their findings. The only major press agencies represented at the conference were the *Washington Times*, AP, Reuters, the *Atlanta Constitution* and a stringer for the *Miami Herald*. The *Washington Post*, the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* did not attend and, like almost every other newspaper in the country, did not report on the IPS trip.

To make matters worse, Dan Podesta of the *Post* filed a story on April 2 claiming that prisoners held in the punishment cells were largely political prisoners, which is exactly the opposite of what IPS reported. His source for this information was Kenneth Roth, deputy director of Human Rights Watch, who was not a member of the IPS delegation but had visited two Cuban prisoners at about the same time. Roth said in a recent interview that Podesta's article was completely incorrect in regard to who is held in the punishment cells, but he thought that Podesta had made an honest mistake,

or an editing error had occurred. Even assuming this is true, however, it does not explain why the *Post* failed to send a reporter to the IPS news conference three weeks earlier, where a full discussion of the matter had taken place. Furthermore, Podesta knew of the IPS trip and was aware of Aryeh Neir's presence on it, but failed to contact him, a relatively simple matter, as Neir works in the same office as Kenneth Roth.

The combined effect of the media's coverage of the U.N. conference in Geneva and their failure to report on the IPS findings is to perpetuate the Reaganite myth of Cuba as an outlaw state, a totalitarian dungeon where the vast majority yearn to breathe free (preferably in Florida). As Julia Sweig pointed out, "the principal target of the Reagan administration's campaign to condemn Cuba for rights abuses is the liberal human rights community in the U.S.—the same community who would support normalization of relations with Cuba. Previous Cuban reluctance to open its prisons gave that community the impression that Cuba had something to hide and only further *de facto* support for the Walters/Abrams allegations." The purpose of the IPS exchange, said Sweig, was to "address and hopefully lay to rest the issue of prison conditions."

Unfortunately, this can never take place as long as the media blacks out positive developments taking place in Cuba and lends support to the U.S.' 30-year war.

It should be noted that a quarter of a century ago pre-revolution Cuban prisons were medieval, and their conversion to modern facilities is an achievement, whatever Foucaultian interpretation one may care to put on it. ■

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IN THESE TIMES APRIL 27-MAY 3, 1988 17

By Annette Leddy

Americans choose a therapeutic exile

POLITICS



Jesuit priest Joe Mulligan warns against romanticizing Nicaragua but enjoys his life there.

able to do there. "Here I am able to creatively use my skills to empower people to make decisions about their own lives. It would be pretty difficult to get people in the U.S. to pay me to do that kind of work. In Nicaragua there is a commitment to providing people with situations that will allow them to find health, that health not be a business used to exploit people."

Having spent much of her life among severely underprivileged people, Zuniga now feels uncomfortable during her infrequent U.S. visits. "The materialism, the things that people have and want to have, and what they're interested in and their span of interests on any given subject, since they're bombarded by so many, I find difficult to deal with."

More politically correct than thou: United in its opposition to official U.S. policy, the American community in Nicaragua nonetheless represents varying degrees of political commitment. But such differences do not sit easy with everyone. Thus, in escaping U.S. culture, Americans can recreate some of its problems.

Every Thursday Americans gather in front of the U.S. Embassy to demonstrate against U.S. policy. "The first question you get asked is, 'How long have you been here?' It's a real competition thing," one American tells me, "just like among lefties back in the States."

Blase Bonpane, director of the Office of the Americas in Santa Monica, Calif., leads several delegations a year to Nicaragua. He thinks some American leftists go down to Nicaragua and get disappointed because it doesn't live up to their preconceived idea of what a socialist state should be. Conversely, a large number of U.S. citizens who aren't at all political, but just curious, go down there and are happily surprised.

"The stereotypes people have of the left is of some sourpuss ideology, and they get down there and people say, 'Let's party,'" laughs Bonpane. "The Americans just can't believe it. Nicaraguans are so eager to celebrate all the time. And it's because they haven't decided the rhetoric first; they've decided the practice and they're open to ideas. And because they're not so totally sure of themselves they're much happier."

According to Paul Oquist, it's important not to underestimate the political commitment, the personal commitment to stopping the war on the part of the U.S. citizens in Nicaragua. "But this other thing is very real. When I talk about myself, the personal motivations are very important as well. The basic point is that there's no sacrifice involved. I don't feel that I'm sacrificing anything."

Annette Leddy is a Santa Monica-based journalist who recently traveled to Nicaragua.

AT ANY GIVEN TIME THERE ARE an estimated 1,500 Americans in Nicaragua, who stay anywhere from two weeks to several years to a lifetime. They are ostensibly there to express their opposition to U.S. policy, and yet, despite some real material discomforts, Americans tend to speak of their visit south as a therapeutic exile from daily life at home. In fact, this American presence in Nicaragua may finally indicate as much dissatisfaction with U.S. culture as with U.S. foreign policy.

"You get Americans coming down here and looking for something that is not in the United States, and there's an intensity of emotional contact here that is astounding and very romantic," says Albert Mitchell, independent filmmaker from Chico, Calif. "It's like Spain of the '30s."

Mitchell funds his filmmaking excursions to Nicaragua by renting out his two movie theaters in Chico, and another one in Red Bluff. He's now on his fifth trip, finishing up his documentary, *In the Eye of the Storm*.

"I first came down in late 1984, like a lot of Americans who were just curious. I didn't belong to any solidarity group or organization—just wanted to see for myself." He liked what he saw, and like most Americans who try to define why they stay in Nicaragua, he talks about "spiritual food" and the "quality of personal contact."

"I've met so many people here simply because I have a van and I pick up riders who invite me home to meet their families and have dinner. We'll arrange to get together the next day, and I tell myself, 'This is just totally delightful; this is the way human beings should be with each other.'"

Let's-do-it attitude: Mitchell, a balding man in his 50s bearing a passing resemblance to John Huston, says he finds it exciting to live in a country where the film industry is in its infancy. He meets Nicaraguans or other Americans open to collaboration: "Kick in a couple of bucks and let's do it, that's the attitude here."

While Mitchell claims not to be especially political, he is certain that Nicaragua's charm cannot be separated from the revolution. "Here you find that 80 percent of the newspaper is not advertising; it's articles or notices of events, and you see men in leadership who've been in jail or fighting in the hills or both." In the U.S., in contrast, "we've reduced everything down to the commercial imperative. Consequently, there's an unhappiness in the atmosphere that makes you seek distraction. I buy things: three of this, four of that, one of the other."

Paul Oquist, a graduate of Los Angeles' Belmont High School, UCLA and UC Berkeley, is in a unique position to understand Mitchell's senti-

ments. He came to Nicaragua in 1961, the summer after high school graduation, with his best friend, a Nicaraguan named Patricio Arguello. "I was here for three months, hunting, fishing, carousing, and I fell in love with the country, mostly with the people. Nicaraguans have very deep, loyal friendships; they place more importance on people than on things."

Oquist kept coming back, as a break from college, graduate school and the grueling part-time jobs he took to support himself. Perhaps coincidentally, the friends he made during these summer trips were active in the 1961 leftist student movement in Leon, and those who survived later founded the FSLN.

During the '60s and '70s many of these friends were killed, including Arguello, who was first tortured by Somoza's National Guard in 1970. Oquist, who worked with the Sandinista front both inside and outside the country, and was involved in drawing up preliminary plans for the first government, is now a Nicaraguan citizen and the national director of Information Organization and Systems.

"Politically, professionally and personally, everything came together, coalesced into one focus, and so I feel very fortunate. I wouldn't change places with anyone in the world."

Inclusive revolution: Oquist believes the charm Nicaragua holds for internationalists—as Nicaraguans refer to resident foreigners—is both personal and political. "I think that politically Nicaragua combines elements that excite a lot of people. They come here to check it out, and because Nicaragua's a very pleasing country, a lot of people fall in love with it. And then because this is a very inclusive revolution, there are no objective impediments to staying involved with the country. That is somewhat new: there aren't many revolutionary societies where that happens. And then, the strength of

commitment on the part of U.S. people is probably stronger because of the strength of U.S. aggression."

Shannon O'Riley, a political organizer, salesman and bicycle mechanic from Santa Barbara, Calif., made several trips to Nicaragua beginning in 1981, always through work with Central American solidarity groups. Now that he and his Nicaraguan girlfriend, an aerobics dancer, have a baby, he's probably here to stay. "It's more stimulating here," he says. "Partly because you're doing what you can to help the government, and partly because you're around the other internationalists."

O'Riley, like Albert Mitchell, believes Americans living in Nicaragua are uniquely interesting, though he can't easily generalize about them. Many come, he believes, because there's an opportunity for people with skills to do politically useful work.

There are, he admits, some negatives. "I'm not on a Nicaraguan budget; anyone who is is barely surviving. I'm on what would be a very

Nicaragua's charm for Americans is both personal and political.

low budget by U.S. standards, and it's still hard economically."

"It's also hard to maintain your health here. I'm always on the verge of getting sick."

Romanticizing Nicaragua: Joe Mulligan, a Jesuit priest with the Central American Historical Institute, had been working with solidarity groups in Chicago and Detroit for many years before coming to Nicaragua. He cautions against "romanticizing" Nicaragua, but admits to enjoying life there. His colleagues at the Institute are intellectually stimulating, and his part-time work in the basic Christian communities fulfills what Karl Barth, a

thinker he admires, recommended: to sit down with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other and see what they have to do with each other.

"My work here is similar to what I was doing in the States, in that I did pastoral work in Hispanic communities, but people in basic Christian communities are better able to do without a priest than they are in the States. I mean, I don't like to be involved in a situation where I'm simply perpetuating dependency by my presence. The lay people who are the real pillars of these communities can keep it going without a priest."

Though he had known for years that Latin Americans make a very clear distinction between U.S. government policies and U.S. citizens, he was nonetheless surprised at the very warm welcome Nicaraguans extended to him. "And one way that's really come home to me is when I celebrate funeral masses for soldiers. Here I am, a U.S. priest celebrating funeral mass for someone killed by U.S. bullets. You would think Nicaraguans might have trouble with that, but I'm completely accepted."

Maria Zuniga, like Joe Mulligan, is the kind of American more typically found throughout Latin America, a person dedicated to helping the poor and underprivileged regardless of how supportive their government may be. She has worked in Central America for 20 years, mostly in Nicaragua, and is married to a Miskito Indian. She heads a health worker training center in Managua, located in the former residence of artist George Morris. It has a white, gallery-like interior, hung with colorful paintings and lit with skylights, opening at the back onto a tropical garden bordered by a grey stone wall.

Zuniga, clearly an experienced interviewee, insists that the pleasure she gets from living in Nicaragua consists solely in the work she is

The Fifth Child
By Doris Lessing
Alfred A. Knopf
133 pp., \$16.95

By Judith Kegan Gardiner

Foul issues: Doris Lessing's lessons of unnatural nurture

FICTION

MURDEROUS AS THE OUT-cast Grendel in the old English epic *Beowulf*, unresponsive to nurture as Shakespeare's Caliban in *The Tempest*, monstrous as Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and diabolically distressing as *Rosemary's Baby*, Ben in Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child* is an unsettling, powerful creature that evokes our deepest fears—as does the book about him.

To reveal the novella's simple plot dissipates none of its readerly pleasures—which are as rich and overdetermined as a fairy tale's—but may indicate its dangers, which lie not in its potential for inducing nightmares, but rather in its reactionary ideology.

The birth of horror: In the promiscuous '60s, David and Harriet Lovatt espouse one another and old-fashioned British family values. They buy a lovely Victorian house and fill it with four lovely children. David the architect works hard, but all is well, even if his father has to help pay for their expansive hospitality and Harriet's mother must help with childcare. "Happiness. A happy family. The Lovatts were a happy family. It was what they had chosen and what they deserved."

Then, despite being warned that she's borne more children than a modern woman ought to, Harriet gets pregnant for the fifth time in seven years. She's exhausted; the pregnancy is hard; the thrashing fetus won't let her sleep; she takes tranquilizers. And when baby Ben is born, he's a horror, not a sweet Down's-syndrome baby like her sister's, but a "Neanderthal baby," "an angry hostile little troll" with hunched shoulders and a sloping forehead, a baby "whom no one could love." He bruises his mother's breast when nursing, he strangles the pet dog and cat and tries to kill his brother.

Guilty and terrified, his mother devotes all her attention to the child she fears, even though he fails to respond. Her husband becomes estranged, and the once happy brood of children turn into watchful neurotics. At five, Ben's father sends him off to an institution for unwanted freaks. Harriet, in a pang of remorse, visits and discovers the hellhole is drugging and killing the children, and rescues her raging, traumatized child.

The Lovatts hire an unemployed drifter to babysit Ben, and the child becomes a motorcycle gang's mascot. Although he learns little and barely speaks, Ben drifts through public school without undue notice: "as everyone knows, all these schools have a layer, like a sediment,

of the uneducable, the unassimilable, the hopeless." By the '80s, "the barbarous '80s," he is the leader of a "leering and jeering" gang, "an alienated, non-comprehending hostile tribe" that thrives on theft and

riot while mouthing revolutionary slogans.

The book jacket wants us to read the novel as a parable, "a vivid reflection of society's unwillingness to confront—and its eventual complicity in—its most brutal aspects." This view finds some support in the novel, especially as it indicts the callousness of those who want deformed children to die out of sight and the complacency of school officials, psychiatrists, professors and other socially sanctioned experts. What the experts can't see but common people understand is that England is rapidly unravelling into "wars and riots; killings and hijackings; murders, thefts and kidnappings."

Bourgeois marriage blues: To think—like the experts—that Ben is a monster because his mother took drugs before his birth or didn't love him after it, is to miss the point. Ben is driven by rage and bloodthirsty hunger. Like Cain and Grendel, he attacks people out of spite, and is impervious to warmth or affection. Ben destroys his family, and his mother concludes, "We are being

punished...for presuming. For thinking we could be happy." Her husband disputes her, but Lessing, like baby Ben, delights in striking down the smug and self-satisfied. Throughout her recent fiction, people who think bourgeois marriage and the bourgeois family can make them happy are doomed to grief, and anyone who tries to beat fate faces a grim future.

The evils of society will not be cured by force, but they won't be helped by social reforms either, since the root of human nature is intractably primitive. Lessing's novel is profoundly conservative in this respect. As myth, Ben is uncanny and evocative; as anthropology, he is ludicrous: such homicidal ogres are hardly adapted for species survival. Yet Lessing regards her fiction as a kind of anthropology, teaching unpalatable but necessary truths.

According to lectures she published last year under the title *Prisons We Choose to Live Inside*, she believes that 90 percent of people are unthinking conformists governed by primitive mass emotions. Her theme in these lectures is "how often and how much we are dominated by our savage past." Enjoying war, people are governed more by "an older part of the human brain...than the decent, human, rational part." "Nearly everyone...behaves automatically," and women are not "inherently more peaceable

than men." Only a few "glorious individualists...stubbornly insist on telling the truth as they see it," and these "natural leaders" of society include writers, who "are by nature more easily able to achieve this detachment from mass emotions and social conditions." Like historians and anthropologists, writers "enable us to see ourselves as others see us."

Lessing not laughing: Lessing decries people who divide others into good and evil categories, yet she is self-righteously dogmatic. Like angry arguers who hiss that they must be right because they have not raised their voices, she inveighs against mass movements that breed "violent, emotional, partisan" minds and so make it "impossible to talk in the cool, quiet, sensible low-keyed tone of voice which...is the only one that can produce truth." Moreover,

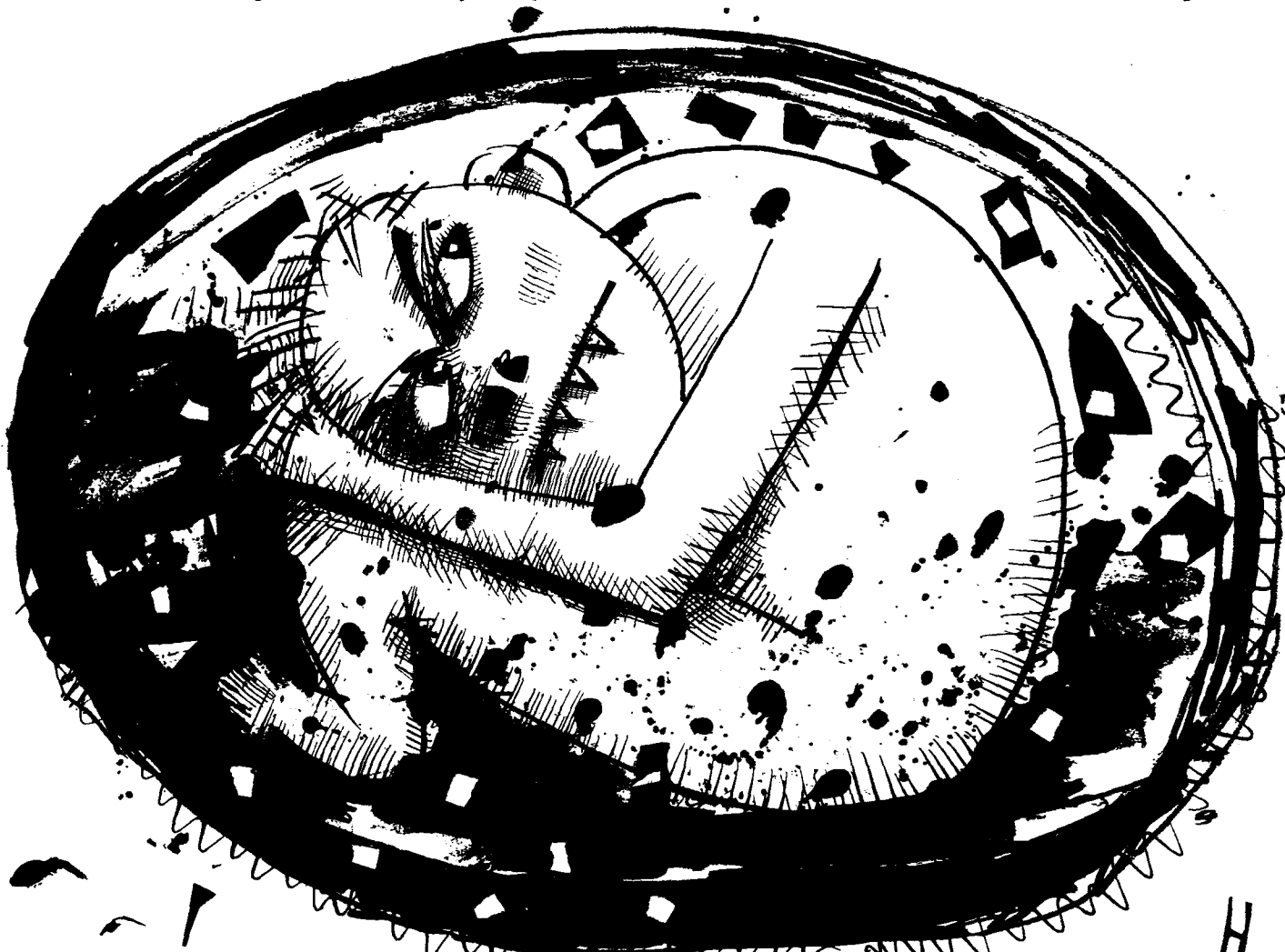
The novel taps into every pregnant woman's fears about her child's future and every parent's occasional bewilderment at children's sheer otherness.

"only the civilized, the liberated, the free person can laugh at herself, himself." Lessing isn't laughing at herself in these lectures or in her novel, but the novel solicits a much wider range of thoughts and emotions than the lectures, and the fears it portrays, however regrettable, are widely shared.

The novel taps into every pregnant woman's apprehensions about her child's future and every parent's occasional bewilderment at children's sheer otherness. Yet some of the novel's estrangement from youth results from Lessing's personal disillusionment with Marxist ideas of progress, a disillusionment followed by despair about the future and by a desire to disclaim responsibility for a younger generation that has not improved the world of its parents.

Although the book ostensibly focuses on "the fifth child," it never shares Ben's alien consciousness. Instead, the novel identifies its viewpoint with the monster's mother, a conscientious woman who grows from married complacency to wise, lonely introspection. She complains that everyone treats her "like a criminal" for having borne the monster and as still more of a criminal for saving his life. Humane and decent, she has tried her best but is rejected—like, one feels, her famous but defensive author, who in this book, as in her recent lectures and space fiction, also brings forth a bleak, conservative vision of human nature that causes people to react with "condemnation, and criticism, and dislike."

Judith Kegan Gardiner is an associate professor of English and women's studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



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The Milagro Beanfield War: so buffed, so cuddly, so very smug that it seems to congratulate itself. Above, Carlos Riquelme and Roberto Carricart.

Redford's *Milagro* doesn't add up to a hill of beans in this crazy world

The Milagro Beanfield War
Directed by Robert Redford

By Pat Aufderheide

THIS IS NOT GOING TO BE THE Latin equivalent of *The Color Purple*, boasted Panamanian singer-composer Ruben Blades to *American Film*, while he was still on location for *The Milagro Beanfield War*. In Robert Redford's interpretation of the John Nichols cult-classic novel, Blades plays the local sheriff in a small New Mexico Chicano community.

Well, if not *The Color Purple*, how about *Fiddler on the Roof* meets *It's a Wonderful Life* in the old-style Disney studios?

I do feel churlish picking on this movie. Phrases like "uplifting," "life-affirming" and "Capra-esque" dot reviewers' blurbs, and it seems to go right along with Easter bunnies and spring blossoms. In a world short on good news and multiplexes littered with movies like *D.O.A.*, it ought to be at least heartwarming that a star the likes of Robert Redford wants to film a boldly polemical novel and celebrate southwest Chicano culture.

But *The Milagro Beanfield War* is so buffed, so cuddly, so very smug that it seems to congratulate itself, leaving little necessity for a viewer to do so. The gaily jumping figure in the ads (can you hear "Zippedy-doodah" in the background?) is the right

icon for this movie, which bounced back from setback after setback in production and, on screen, refuses to let viewers get too depressed, engaged or, indeed, too *anything*.

The basic plot and characters are still (after some back-and-forth between author Nichols and screenwriter David Ward) anchored to

FILM

Nichols' 1974 book, written, in Nichols' own words, as a "radical novel." In a small New Mexico village, Chicano farmer, husband and father Joe Mondragon (Chick Vennera) illegally irrigates his deceased father's parched beanfield.

The action triggers community controversy over the key resources of land and water. And it openly challenges the plans of encroaching developers who want to turn the beanfield into a golf course and the town into a resort. Hot-blooded car mechanic Ruby (Sonia Braga) bullies the townsfolk and depressed liberal lawyer Charley (John Heard) into the fray against thuggish developers, their sycophantic hangers-on and political toadies.

The novel, if not great literature, had vitality that drew on social and political conflicts and an engagement with southwest and Chicano culture. That was, apparently, what attracted Redford to the project, since he, in the same *American Film* article, said, "*Milagro* is about the

eccentricity of a culture not understood by another culture. It's about acceptable mysticism in our time, and it's about the decimation of a culture because of profit."

But the movie never risks presenting audiences with the experience of the culture that is not being understood. Instead it translates the magical power of a mountain subculture into mainstream-movie clichés of quaintly quirky characters and story gambits.

Politics takes a backseat: The plot creaks as it alternates between the good guys (the pro-beanfield faction) and the bad guys (the bankrollers and the bimbo with a heart of gold, who Melanie Griffith valiantly tries to make human). Splashes are added of local color, spectacular scenery and references to spiritual presence (icons, and a visiting angel, played with father-knows-best aplomb by Robert Carricart).

"There's probably a little bit more accident in the film than in the book," Redford said, "because otherwise it gets political, and I don't believe in being too overtly political in film. The politics should take a backseat to the more major things for an audience, which are story and character."

That division between politics and experience is familiar, and self-consciously "radical" art that moralizes in the name of political righteousness (a tendency that Nichols hasn't been immune to over his publishing

career) only feeds it. But in life and in the art that moves us to empathy, politics both shapes and is shaped by culture and character, and can't be neatly separated from story without losing its grounding in experience.

This movie falls back on generic character clichés (bad bankers, corrupt politicians, quaint aged townsfolk, tempestuous spitfire women). And the multinational Latin cast never overcomes its generic international flavor to convince us that we're watching a community with ancient local roots and traditions. Brazilian star Sonia Braga's distinctive accent slips through despite her labored efforts to resyncopate her English, although awful lines don't give her any help. "What good is a hometown if everyone you know is gone?" she laboriously articulates. The pros' performances clash noticeably with the look and demeanor of the locals, who decorate scenes like framed paintings on a wall. Christopher Walken camps up a villain part that's written to be flintily macho; he seems to be playing the John Waters' version of this movie. The one actor who looks like he belongs in a movie from the Nichols book—although he's not given much to work with—is superb Mexican character actor Carlos Riquelme, who plays patriarch Amarante.

Stylistically, *Milagro* never moves off the mainstream dime, the spot held by easy-to-read movies that can be shown on airplanes and watched by three generations in a living room without raising an eyebrow or ruffling expectations. (One of the ironies of the movie year has to be this movie's "R" rating, which comes from three glancing uses of the "f" word.) As the movie opens with an

Our Town tour of the little village, we are introduced to people who might as well have "Town Character" pasted on their foreheads.

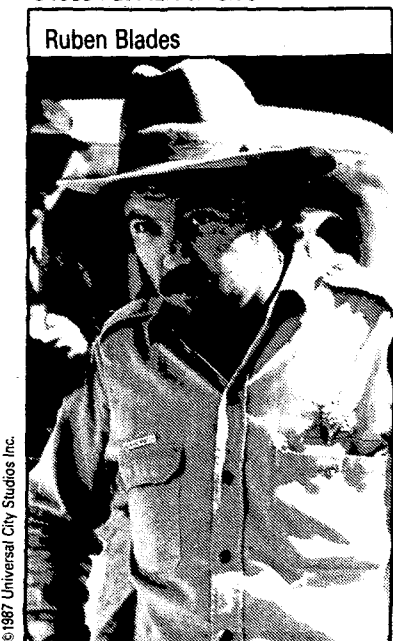
Magical moments are registered visually by such scenes as one in which newspapers are flung into the air and scatter across a blue-blue sky like birds, to inspiring string music. Action is moved along with self-consciously cute scenes, such as one in which oldsters come into a store to buy ammunition to defend beanfielder Mondragon. The camera gives us face after weatherbeaten face asking for different brands of ammo, until finally the last face asks for a can of food...and a box of ammo. "Dum-dum!" goes the soundtrack, an upbeat over-and-out cue. This kind of pacing and editing borders on ultrasafe, made-for-TV-movie cuing.

Risks and results: Redford gambled plenty in the making of *Milagro*. It took him years to first gain rights (from coproducer Moctesuma Esparza) and then pull the production together. The town where he wanted to film in New Mexico decided—in a neat recapitulation of the movie's theme—that they didn't want big-time money disturbing their peace. He began production slightly uphill, without a cast or working script. Post-production problems blew the originally small-budget production into one of the bigger-ticket items of the year.

Redford gambled everywhere but where it counted, on authenticity. Now he's got a small movie whose budget doesn't show up on screen and which, *pace* *Blades*, does have its parallels to *The Color Purple*. Like Spielberg's film, it refers more to other movie conventions than it does to the texture of the experience and culture of its subjects.

The Milagro Beanfield War is a film you don't hate and you don't love. Of course, just for that reason it may be a long-range if medium-cool market success. It's the kind of film that people feel obscurely guilty for not having loved more, the kind of film for which those adjectives of displaced or obligatory emotion—"heartwarming," or "uplifting"—are perfectly appropriate. ■

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By Pat Aufderheide

Non-profit groups making waves

By Marvin Wanetick

EVERY WEEKDAY MORNING AT 10 o'clock, an announcer comes on public radio station WDET-FM to let Detroit's hip community know that it's time for the *Dave Dixon Program*.

Part of this morning ritual is familiar to listeners of virtually every public radio and television station in the country, the roll call of underwriters. In this case, it's Sam's Jams record shop, Mark Keller's boutiques...and the Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), "dedicated to world peace and the prevention of nuclear war."

It makes sense for certain retailers to want to reach Dave Dixon's audience, but most "progressive" organizations have trouble enough buying coffee for the next meeting. Isn't it strange that a non-profit public interest group should underwrite an entertainment program?

"We shouldn't PSR be as popular as Sam's Jams?" asks Dr. Marc Lindy, a suburban podiatrist and member of the PSR's Detroit chapter. "Name recognition is the key to success for groups like ours."

"I've been a fan of Dave Dixon since the '60s," says Lindy. "When I heard his show needed another underwriter, I thought it was a great opportunity for PSR. Dave has a diverse audience of about 11,000 every day, and a lot of them will be glad to learn that a group like PSR exists."

Fund, fund, fund: PSR is a national organization whose three-fold purpose, according to its by-laws, is to provide the medical community with accurate scientific data, to alert the public to the health dangers of the nuclear arms race, and to develop support for programs that promote effective disarmament and peace.

Lindy believes PSR's underwriting has already achieved results. "We have at least a dozen new members directly from the underwriting. And people see a PSR sticker on my car and ask, 'Isn't that the group on the *Dave Dixon Show*?' A woman who had just moved here from Nevada called to get a referral to a PSR doctor because she appreciated what we were doing."

The PSR underwriting monies come from special fund-raising activities among its 600 local members and not from the group's treasury. "I went 'door-to-door' by phone asking members to contribute one day's underwriting—\$38.50—until I raised three month's worth," Lindy recalls.

Dixon's program is a natural for underwriting by a "progressive" organization. A veteran of what was

"peace" groups to emulate PSR, but so far without success. "Public broadcasting covers the activities and airs the public service announcements of public interest groups more than any other media. We owe it our support."

So far, PSR's participation has generated little reaction among WDET's listeners, but public interest group underwriting might hold potential for controversy, either over the politics of the underwriter or the good taste of the underwriting message.

Says Zatina, "No, we wouldn't accept the Nazi party or the Ku Klux Klan as underwriters, but in general we assess what is appropriate and in good taste for our listeners. I did check out the PSR underwriting with the station's general manager."

Another trend to watch in public broadcasting is the implementation of a 1984 Federal Communications Commission ruling permitting public stations to charge non-profits for traditionally free Public Service Announcements (PSAs). According to Development Exchange Director Shaw, KNPR in Las Vegas has already implemented this new policy. "I think it's going to be a widely used management tool to help sort out all the requests stations get for free time. This way, the non-profits that want the PSAs the most will be on the air."

If they can afford to pay for the time. If this trend catches on, non-profits may have to consider how important public broadcasting is to the success of their organizations. And public interest groups may be forced to take new interest in the bottom line.

Marvin Wanetick is a Detroit-area freelance writer.

known as progressive FM rock'n'roll in the late '60s, Dixon's public radio reincarnation has attracted critical acclaim and a loyal audience for its eclectic blend of new age, jazz and rock'n'roll music accompanied by his wry sense of humor.

Non-profit underwriting is a generally new phenomenon nationwide. The Natural Resources Defense Council is an underwriter for National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition* newscasts. According to Nathan

RADIO

Shaw, director of the Development Exchange, a Washington, D.C.-based clearinghouse for public broadcasting fund-raising information, there are other local non-profits acting as underwriters, but so rarely that there are no statistics available. "They're not even a blip on our radar screen," says Shaw. "We focus on underwriting by major commercial firms."

For Dixon and WDET Development Director Mary Zatina, PSR's participation is in line with a new station policy of broadening the existing underwriting base. "Since PSR started with Dave," reports Zatina, "we've had two local non-profit groups—a neighborhood association and a private school—sign up as underwriters."

Bottom-line time: Lindy has tried to convince other area



Call "General Hospital"

Soap operas and sitcoms were running out of stashed scripts, while the Writers Guild of America, the union for screenwriters, was still on strike in the third week of April. Management's fear: that viewers could get restless, and leave their favorite shows. That could leave networks, already quaking with ratings drops, paying back up to \$100 million to advertisers to adjust rates for falling audiences.

The Guild was far more unified than three years ago, when a short strike ended in capitulation on major issues. Enforcement measures such as expulsion from the union and 110 percent fines for scab writing and \$500 fines for failure to show up for picket duty helped keep members on the straight and narrow, but solidarity didn't come from policing alone. New executive director Brian Walton, who has stressed respect for writers as well as money issues, has own support from different groups within the union.

Writers were angry that the recent Directors Guild contract—which the industry expects them to accept as ground rules for their contract—gave in on a crucial issue for them, TV residuals. The writers were fighting an industry rollback proposal: to substitute residuals payments based on gross revenues rather than on a fixed rate on one-hour TV shows. They also wanted more money for foreign sales, which have increased dramatically, and more creative control—presence on the set, for example, and the chance to buy back unproduced scripts.

The issues involved in the strike capture the tensions in the industry. They are much less about money today and tomorrow, than about power and long-range shifts in the industry. As production becomes increasingly conglomerated and marketing global, the writers pushed for a cut of the profits. They have effectively been undercut by the Directors' Guild—another piece of evidence that unions divided by sector are at a disadvantage in a fight with conglomerate producers. In this strike, producers have been particularly intransigent, apparently waiting to see if union solidarity will break down before the ratings plunge.

No Time, No Money

A recent Louis Harris poll shows that Americans would like to support the arts more—even if it means a small tax—but are enjoying arts performances less. Attendance at ballet, theater, opera and musical concerts is down from 1984. The cost bothered some people in the survey (29 percent), but the most common reason was "don't have enough time." The average time spent working has increased more than six hours a week since 1973.

Bigger, Not Better

Two giant cable companies, United Cable TV and United Arts Communications, recently merged, making the new United Artists Entertainment the third largest cable operator in the country, as well as the largest movie theater chain. The biggest winner wasn't either one of the companies directly involved, but was instead the industry's largest cable company, Tele-Communications Inc. TCI owned big chunks of both originally, and now owns 52 percent of the merged company.

Cable programmers, smaller cable companies, satellite dish owners, independent TV station owners and film producers (who want competitive markets for their work) have complained that TCI's grip on the market is already so strong that it effectively controls programming choices when TCI decides what to carry on its systems. The Justice Department has shown no interest in antitrust action yet, but Congress is taking a hard look at the industry, with more hearings planned for May. Worried about the looming prospect of losing the Reagan-era Justice Department's indifference to antitrust violations, National Cable Television Association head Jim Mooney has taken to singing the virtues of conglomeration. He claims that it makes possible bailing out the worthy "little guys"—like programmers of documentaries and kids' shows—that otherwise would go under in the high-stakes market. No fair asking how the little guys might do if the field weren't dominated by Goliaths.

Rockin' for Dollars

When you hear that old rock'n'roll, don't tell your kid to switch the channel to public TV. That is public TV, if you're high-powered New York station WNET or several other public TV stations during pledge week. Pledge week, when viewers are dunned to become subscribers, is no time to start running hard-hitting documentaries, and so stations buy prepackaged rock shows from syndicators who sell them to public and commercial TV alike.

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AIDS

Continued from page 8

she would never have taken the test if she had any idea she would test positive.

But living in California—where the number of women with AIDS is far fewer than in New York—she had trouble finding help in making a decision about her pregnancy. At the county hospital the first doctor she visited recommended abortion in no uncertain terms. A second doctor at a community clinic suggested the same. But Jane felt that neither of them was really sympathetic to her dilemma. In the end, with the support of the child's father, she decided to go ahead with her pregnancy despite the risks.

She says her Catholic faith had a lot to do with the decision. "When this happened, it was out of my hands. I had no control over it. I just had to give it to the Lord," says Jane. Two weeks later she miscarried.

On their own: As the numbers grow, there is even a difference of opinion over how significant infected babies are in the overall picture of the epidemic. On the one hand, there is rising public concern over how the health and foster-care systems will cope with the growing number of babies born with the virus. The House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families predicted in mid-December that by the year 1991 some 3,000 children under the age of 13 will be sick with AIDS, the vast majority infected perinatally. They will enter a health and foster-care system already "very near the total exhaustion of its resources," warns committee chairman

Rep. George Miller (D-CA).

But Dr. Pauline Thomas, an epidemiologist and a member of New York City's AIDS surveillance team, argues that babies and children will never be more than a small part of the epidemic. "Only a small portion of medical resources are going to children. There will always be more infected women and men. Children will always be in the minority," says Thomas. And unlike adults, "they don't transmit the illness themselves," she adds.

But while the controversy continues, women deal with the frightening prospects of their disease mostly by themselves, barely realizing they are at the center of a storm. Even though Monica's tests for AIDS are negative, Ellie has them repeated every three months. At 27, she's writing her will and has arranged for her aunt and uncle to care for Monica if she isn't able to.

And Ellie had her tubes tied so she won't get pregnant again. "In my circumstances I don't know how I could have another child. I can't leave kids all around the place," she says.

Jane stays inside at the slightest sign of a cold and makes excuses to her neighbor about why she won't go out shopping. She's careful about practicing safe sex and fearful of giving the virus to someone else. But she still hopes that someday she can try to have another baby. "People say, 'you're young. You don't know when a cure could come,'" she says.

Carol Brown is a San Francisco-based journalist.

that more dead humpbacks are now washing up on the beaches of the Dominican Republic. The cause of the dolphins' demise is still unknown, though above normal levels of PCBs have been found in the animals' tissues.

"My husband has been lobstering 17 years and we've never seen anything like this," says Debbie Wynn of Rhode Island. "A year ago, fishermen were returning more short lobsters than they'd seen for years. Not a single one has been seen since the fall. We're fishing with 20 percent more gear and catching 70 percent less lobsters. And the red crabs look like somebody's taken a blowtorch to them."

"There's a yellow scum floating on the surface 150 to 175 miles away from the dumpsite itself, and all the shellfish have burn spots from exposure to heavy metals," she continues. "I'm so scared. The meat isn't contaminated, but these creatures can't survive without their shells. And the pollution affects crabs and lobsters first, then clams and scallops, then goes into the fish. That's when consumers will have cause to worry, and we may all be out of business."

According to Dr. D. Jay Grimes, a microbiologist at the University of New Hampshire, virulent pathogens found in sewage wastes can definitely be transmitted to humans through the water, mist or spray along the shore, or even through seafood. Grimes and others have found that cholera-causing pathogens can survive for up to a year in the water or sediments, contrary to long-standing scientific theory that they would dilute rapidly. "My hypothesis," Grimes told the *National Fisherman* magazine, "is that many of the chronic pollutants entering the ocean are being used as a food source, which in turn can stimulate pathogens and cause disease in fish and dolphins."

Seafood consumption in the U.S. reached a record 14.7 pounds per person in 1987. But according to an April 8 article in the *Wall Street Journal*, about 75 percent of this seafood "goes to market without being examined for impurities or tested for toxins and viruses." A recent spate of seafood-poisoning outbreaks, including the first cholera case in the U.S. since 1911, has prompted several consumer groups to beseech the federal government to inspect seafood the same way it checks beef and poultry. "The potential danger from seafood is greater than it has ever been from red meat and poultry," Michael Windham, Louisiana's director of meat and seafood inspection was quoted as saying, adding that many seafood plants on the Gulf Coast are "almost like dumps."

Off the Northeast coast, numerous reports indicate that the 21 sludge barges in operation often don't bother to journey all the way to the 106-mile site, and simply dump as soon as they're out of sight of land. Fishermen have observed that "they are short-dumping right where the fluke, bluefish and scup spawn," says Charlie Johnson, executive director of the New York Sportfishing Federation. "This could have a tremendous effect on in-shore fishing."

For years groups like Clean Ocean Action have been demanding some kind of monitoring system on the waste-haulers. Finally, beginning in June, the EPA is scheduled to begin requiring dumpers to install "black boxes" to record the time and location that wastes are discharged into the sea.

Ocean roulette: Meanwhile, New York is adamantly hanging onto what it calls its ocean "solution," with Mayor Ed Koch insisting that alternative disposal methods are too expensive. At a Senate hearing in February,

Koch termed banning of ocean dumping "an irrational solution to a political problem." Cliff Curtis, director of the Oceanic Society, then bemoaned Koch's remarks as "voodoo science."

And New Jersey Gov. Tom Kean, unveiling his own 14-point plan to spend \$200 million over the next five years to clean up his state's shoreline, described the dumping as "playing Russian roulette with the ocean resources." But given threats by New York Sens. Daniel Moynihan and Alphonse D'Amato to filibuster all the bills to ban ocean dumping, congressional action is considered tentative at best.

Land-based options for sewage sludge do, of course, exist—including turning the material into fertilizer or compost (see accompanying story). Even in the New York-New Jersey area, 29 of the 38 municipalities (notably excluding Manhattan) have found other methods than ocean dumping since 1977. Christopher Daggett, the EPA's regional administrator, has admitted he views ocean dumping "as a last resort" because "we are not sure where the material goes, how far it moves and what its long-term effects are on the marine environment."

Daggett told the New York Water Pollution Control Association in January that he would personally prefer imperfect incineration or landfill alternatives, since "at least these methods are based on altering or separating the waste from the environment." But Daggett conceded that, given the agency's 1981 setback in court, other avenues "have remained closed because of environmental gridlock and simple inertia."

The EPA is currently reviewing new permit applications submitted by the sludge dumpers before deciding whether to let the practice continue beyond 1991. Yet the EPA's rationale behind the selection of the 106-mile site seems sharply at odds with both Daggett's opinion and the assessment of federal fishery agencies. An EPA fact sheet states that compared to the previous 12-mile dumping ground, "impacts [at 106] are minimal, due to dilution and dispersal of sludge, and to deeper water, more active currents, lower fish and shellfish populations.... Use of the site is not expected to interfere with biological or physical resources."

As for the sludge, all the EPA says is that nothing floatable is permitted in it. EPA's restriction scarcely takes into account the unknown, unmonitored quantities of industrial and household waste in the sludge. As long as industries are allowed to keep pouring toxics down the drain into sewage treatment systems, danger looms large.

"It really gets into designing our industrial capacities so you recycle wastes from the very beginning," says Jack Pearce of the National Marine Fisheries Service. "And you have to inform the public that they can't just dump any old chemical down the toilet or the drain."

A new Coalition to Cease Ocean Dumping, comprised of representatives from both the recreational and commercial fishing industries as well as environmental groups, bankers and lawyers, was formed April 11 at an all-day meeting in Groton, Conn. Whether it can turn the tide—either in Congress, through a court injunction, or some other action—is an open question.

But as Rhode Island Congresswoman Claudine Schneider put it shortly after introducing the first banning bill in the House, "If we continue to let dumpers pour eight million tons of toxic sludge a year into our oceans, we may need divine guidance for help."

Dick Russell writes regularly on environmental issues for *In These Times*.

Atlantic Coast

Continued from page 13

"There is indication from the National Marine Fisheries Service that they cannot disprove a relationship between dumping at the 106-mile site and the killing of dolphins and whales last year," says Robert Hayes, a former NOAA legal counsel and now a private attorney in Washington who is fighting the ocean dumping. A mysterious ocean

epidemic last summer found bottlenosed dolphins washing ashore dead from New Jersey to Virginia Beach, with scientists estimating conservatively that 1,000-plus of the 6,000 to 8,000 dolphins believed to be presently north of Cape Hatteras perished. Last November and December about two-dozen whales also were found beached, primarily along the shores of Cape Cod. Scientists have laid the blame for the whale deaths on nature's red tide, but this is belied by the fact

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LIFE IN HELL

LIFE IN HELL

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By Dean Robbins

BY THE TIME DINAH WASHINGTON died in 1963 at age 39 from an accidental overdose of booze and pills, she'd earned the title "Queen of the Blues." Until the very end she cast a sharp eye on the world and was absolutely honest about what she found. That made her death especially cruel: she remained wide open to experience, channeling every new lesson about love and loss into her records.

Though Washington ranks with the country's greatest vocalists—Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald and Bessie Smith—their fame has eluded her. Part of the problem is that Mercury, her record label for almost 20 years, hasn't served her well. The company has kept only her more commercial material in print—slighting the superior jazz, blues and R&B that built her reputation.

A stranger on Earth: All that's about to change, however. Last fall Mercury unveiled the first two volumes of *The Complete Dinah Washington on Mercury*, including all her work from 1946 to 1952. Over the next two years the company plans to re-release its entire Washington catalogue, a breathtaking project that's expected to fill 21 compact discs. For the first time, listeners will be able to survey Dinah's whole career from jubilant '40s R&B to jazz masterpieces of the late '50s.

Washington was born into grinding poverty in 1924, the daughter of a devout Christian woman and a gambler with rambling on his mind. Derided as a child for being chubby and plain, Dinah learned early what it was like to be an outcast—a "stranger on Earth," as she called herself in a 1963 recording.

The only thing she took pride in was her vocal gift, which blossomed as she performed gospel music at South Side Chicago churches. But she had a taste for money and men, and a voice far too sensual for gospel. In 1943, when she was 19, Lionel Hampton heard her at a nightclub and immediately offered her a job in his prestigious big band.

Washington often had that effect on people. They heard her once, and they were hooked. With her high, penetrating voice, she gave the blues a nasty kick (especially when she ended a phrase with her teasing upward gliss) and toughened up the silliest lyric by inserting a carnal "mmm" or "baby" in strategic spots. She could cut right through a song's schmaltz with melisma (a method of "worrying" a note that she borrowed from gospel music), an expressive vibrato and a precise diction that gave each syllable the proper dramatic weight.

In 1946 Washington left Hampton's band and signed with Mercury, launching her reign as "the Queen of the Jukeboxes." She often bragged—justifiably—that she could sing any kind of song, and Mercury made her pay dearly for this versatility. Whenever a white artist had a hit with a country song, show tune or movie theme, the company rushed Washington in to make a cover version for black audiences. But precisely because she sang "black"—and refused to leach the soul out of her vocals—Mercury didn't do much to promote her records or aim them anywhere but the ghettos.

Stormy weather: This second-class status fueled the feelings of inferiority that had dogged her since childhood. She developed a tough exterior (becoming famous for drink-

ing, gambling and tussling with her numerous husbands and lovers), but remained fragile and lonely underneath. She could be deeply loving or ornery, high-spirited or suicidal.

Such a stormy style might have eaten away at Washington's talent, as it had Billie Holiday's. But instead of being overtaken by her passions, Washington harnessed them. She avoided melodrama in her work by cultivating irony and wit. And her slightly detached, matter-of-fact delivery projected a toughness that made her despair even more poignant.

Washington was a peerless R&B singer from the word go: early songs on the first two Mercury sets (like 1946's "Slick Chick on the Mellow Side") have the sass and bite of a stinging trumpet solo. But her real genius didn't emerge until the mid-'50s, when she recorded masterful jazz albums like *Dinah Sings Fats Waller*. Here she learned to meld the elemental passion of her R&B performances with the nuances of her idol, Billie Holiday. Better than any of her peers, she could make a song build—not exactly to the wailing climaxes of her greatest disciple, Aretha Franklin, but to the wrenching emotional peaks that only come from a blend of vocal muscle and dramatic finesse.

In 1959, when Washington persuaded Mercury to go all out on the production and promotion of *What a Difference a Day Makes*, she finally achieved crossover success. This new popularity satisfied her desire for acceptance, but didn't give her a sense of well-being. Friends say she became even more lonely and dejected over her inability to find a permanent relationship.

In 1963 things began to look up with her marriage to football star Dick "Night Train" Lane (husband number nine), who seemed to be the stable man she'd always wanted. Washington's premature death—after she'd carelessly swallowed a fatal mixture of pills and alcohol—came as a bitter shock. She was reportedly happier than she'd been in years and was beginning to get her life back on track.

Since Dinah sank so much of her pleasure and pain into her songs, subsequent Mercury releases will make it possible to experience her life—in both its exaltation and misery—almost as vividly as she did.

Washington's last recordings—slyly embellished blues performances like "Me and My Gin"—are among her best, and there is no telling what might have come if she'd had another few decades to live and learn. Who knows what wisdom she would have gleaned from a happy marriage or the black pride of the '60s, or even a comfortable life in 1988, when she would have been only 64 years old. ■

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Dinah's

Mercurial

singer

Dinah

Washington's

entire

catalogue

of

classic

R&B,

blues

and

jazz

is

being

re-released

by

Mercury.

place

